



Markets to watch in '95
Anatole Kaletsky sees dollars doing well in his crystal ball, but beware the Far East, p29



20p theatre seat
A top show for the price of *The Times*. Details, token p43



Philip Howard
Agony, tears and the horrors of broken glass when a contact lens comes to grief, p17

20P

THE TIMES

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THURSDAY JANUARY 12 1995

Blair lambasts his 'foolish' MEPs

Tories begin to woo back Euro rebels

By Philip Webster, Jill Sherman and Arthur Leathley

THE Government began wooing back the Conservative Euro-rebels last night as a Cabinet minister said he hoped their breach with the party would be resolved as speedily as possible.

Five of the nine rebels supported the Government in votes that will retain its majority on the standing committees examining legislation in detail. Four of them abstained but two of these were understood to be abroad.

The five rebels backing the Government were Sir Richard Body, Sir Teddy Taylor, John Wilkinson, Nicholas Budgen and Richard Shepherd. Tony Marlow supported the Government on one vote but abstained on another.

Had it lost, the Government would have faced the prospect of seeing its legislative programme bogged down in committee, with the possibility of defeat on contentious issues.

Tony Newton, leader of the Commons, had earlier offered the most conciliatory gesture so far to the rebels when he said that "all of us wish to see this situation resolved as speedily as possible". His remarks followed John Major's marked softening of tone at the weekend when he suggested that they could come back within weeks rather than months.

Labour also tried to control its dissidents yesterday. Tony Blair stamped his authority on the party with a ferocious attack on 32 Euro-MPs and an order to his Shadow Cabinet to sharpen its act.

In Brussels he accused the MEPs of "infantile incompetence" and gross discourtesy in placing a newspaper advertisement stating opposition to his plans to rewrite Clause Four of the party's

constitution. His tough language surprised friends and opponents. Mr Blair made plain his anger that a visit intended to underline Labour's positive attitude towards Europe had been overshadowed by the "extremely foolish" action of the 32 MEPs.

He was heckled by a handful of dissidents as he lectured them on the need for party discipline to win the trust of voters. One of the ringleaders, Alex Falconer, later accused Mr Blair of using "Leninist" language and said he was doing little to encourage healthy debate.

Even as the leader spoke, his supporters in the parliament were organising a

counter-attack. Some 36 MEPs had by last night signed a letter to appear in *The Guardian* voicing their support for Mr Blair's reform plans. They included seven identified with the original offending advertisement.

Jeremy Hanley, Conservative chairman, said Mr Blair was behaving like a "spoilt child" as he watched his plans unravelling before his eyes. Back in London, the Labour leader told his Shadow Cabinet colleagues that they had to show greater discipline if Labour was to be taken seriously as a party of government. He implied them to show more vigilance in 1995 "as we are now being treated as a government in waiting, rather than a party in opposition".

Mr Blair ordered all

frontbenchers to check policy statements and adhere to the policy-making process, and to refer public spending and tax questions to Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor.

He said: "The country is in despair of this Government. In 1995 we must make sure that the desire for Labour is sustained right through to the general election."

Mr Blair told the MEPs in Brussels: "Many party members and many party supporters will be dismayed, as will many others desperate for a Labour government, that our new year offensive was blunted." Insisting that his attempts to change Clause Four were far from being a distraction, he added: "This debate will enrich our party, strengthen it, strengthen its identity and deepen its roots in the communities we wish to serve."

Several MEPs rose to support Mr Blair but those who opposed Clause Four changes were unrepentant and vowed to continue their campaign to prevent Mr Blair updating the 56-word clause. Many were shaken by the force of his language and attack.

Mr Blair had said: "There is no point in mincing words. On Monday we launched a major offensive for change. We wanted maximum publicity for obvious reasons. Until 6pm that was going according to strategy. The next day I was giving a keynote speech on Europe which was entirely overshadowed by what I regard as a gross discourtesy. There can be no excuse for the infantile incompetence which has blunted our new year message."

Mr Blair insisted that there were no realistic calls for public utilities to be taken

Continued on page 2, col 6



President Dudaev, backed by bodyguards, at his press conference yesterday

Peace in an hour, says Dudaev

FROM RICHARD BERTON IN MOSCOW

GENERAL Dzhokhar Dudaev, the Chechen leader, yesterday made his first public appearance for almost two weeks and called for a peaceful settlement to his breakaway region's bloody conflict with Russia.

Fierce street fighting continued in the capital, Grozny, as General Dudaev spoke at a

news conference in a western suburb of the besieged city. The clashes took place mostly around the presidential palace, which took several direct hits from Russian artillery.

General Dudaev said that the war could be "solved in one day or one hour" if the will for negotiation existed.

"The Russian people have no grudge against Chechens, and the Chechen people have no grudge against Russians,"

the former Soviet air force officer said. "There is no basis for that. We are all victims of the foolish policy of people with sick imaginations."

Among the casualties yesterday were six adults killed and five children hurt when their shelter near the presidential palace was shelled.

Fears for democracy, page 13
Letters, page 19
Politics of oil, page 29

Saatchi sets up rival agency with colleagues who resigned

By Martin Waller, Deputy City Editor

MAURICE SAATCHI is setting up his own rival advertising agency with help from the three Saatchi & Saatchi executives who resigned earlier this week in protest at his dismissal last month from the agency he formed in 1970.

The three confirmed last night that they would be joining him as partners "at a date to be agreed". They will tentatively be called The New Saatchi Agency while clearance for use of the name is sought from lawyers.

Mr Saatchi said: "Events have moved much more quickly than anyone could have imagined. To avoid any more uncertainty, I have decided to announce the foundation of a new agency."

The three, acting chairman Jeremy Sinclair, Bill Muirhead, head of Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising World Wide's North American business, and David Kershaw, its head in Britain, left after accusing the remaining directors of "commercial vandalism".

The company insisted yesterday that the executives would have to work out their contracts, which range from one year to three years in the case of Mr Sinclair.

Further resignations from Saatchi & Saatchi were announced yesterday. Those going are the joint managing directors of Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising, the London agency, Nick Hurrell and Moray MacLennan, as well as two creative directors there, Simon Dicketts and James Lowther.

A further blow for the agency came from clients. British Airways said its \$125 million worth of business was now formally under review and that the contract with Saatchi & Saatchi would end in four months, although the airline did not rule out re-employing the agency.

Dixons Group, the high street retailer, said that its £40 million worth of business a year would be reviewed. John Clare, managing director of Dixons, said the company "looks very unstable. That doesn't leave us in a very happy position."

Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, said the shake-out at Saatchi was one of the worst examples of corporate governance he had seen.

At least one other big Saatchi & Saatchi client has shown unease at the battle being fought over the compa-



Saatchi: announcement to end the uncertainty

ny's future. Mars, the US confectionery firm that awards \$400 million worth of work to the company each year, has also said its account is under review. But the American-owned household goods group Procter & Gamble has said it will keep its business with Saatchi.

Saatchi & Saatchi's share price has plunged since Mr Saatchi was dismissed as chairman on December 16. Having traded at above 150p then, the shares dropped another 42p to 107½p yesterday.

Leak of talent, page 25
Pennington, page 27

Japan barred from VJ-Day

Veterans and Second World War prisoners in the Far East yesterday celebrated as Japan was excluded from August ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the Japanese surrender. Page 5

£700,000 bill for forged painting

A High Court judge ordered Christie's to pay almost £700,000 to a Swiss art dealer yesterday after ruling that an Egon Schiele painting that she had bought at auction for £500,000 four years ago was a forgery within the meaning of Christie's conditions. Page 3

INDEX	
Births, marriages, deaths...	20
Bridge...	7
Chess...	7, 48
Crossword...	24
Leading articles...	19
Letters...	19, 29, 45
Obituaries...	21
Royal Opera House...	34-36
Weather...	24
TV & Radio...	46, 47

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Socialist group threaten to veto Brussels Commission

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU IN BRUSSELS

THE European Union was facing a constitutional crisis yesterday after the socialist majority in the European Parliament threatened to veto Jacques Santer's new European Commission at a vote in Strasbourg next week.

The parliament's threat came after Mr Santer refused to accede to demands from MEPs that he should change some key portfolios inside the European Commission, and followed a series of confirmation hearings last week which in some cases degenerated into farce.

Under the Maastricht Treaty, the parliament can for the first time block the entire Commission, but not individual commissioners. While the

two British commissioners, Sir Leon Brittan and Neil Kinnock, received much acclaim for their performances at the hearings, MEPs criticised sharply the competence and commitment of several other nominees, especially those from Scandinavia.

Ericki Liikanen of Finland



Greene: "Mr Santer will not move on demands"

was criticised for not answering questions, while Ritt Bjerregaard, of Denmark, and Sweden's Anita Gradin were attacked for not having done their homework.

MEPs were particularly critical of Pádraig Flynn, the Irish social affairs commissioner, for not paying sufficient attention to equal rights for women.

Parliamentary leaders yesterday met Mr Santer in a heated session that lasted several hours longer than planned. Pauline Greene, the British Labour MEP and leader of the European socialists, said: "My understanding is that Mr Santer is not prepared to move on the demands. If there is no response, it will be

Continued on page 2, col 5

Politics, page 11

'The jackal' clinches £12m deal for Amis

By Damian Whitworth and Katherine Bergen

ONE OF the publishing world's most bitter and protracted auctions finally ended last night when Martin Amis clinched a two-book deal with HarperCollins for a sum in the region of £500,000.

The deal for his new novel *The Information* and a collection of short stories was struck after weeks of wrangling during which Amis set aside his agent, Pat Kavanagh, and hired Andrew Wylie, the American nicknamed "the jackal."

The author made it known that he wanted £500,000 for the third novel in a trilogy, but his publisher Jonathan Cape could not meet this demand. A number of publishing houses became involved in an auction which seemed to reach a stalemate last week. It was

then that Amis brought in Mr Wylie.

Malcolm Edwards, fiction publishing director at HarperCollins, said last night that the negotiations, in which he was involved, had been "civilised and straightforward", but he refused to comment on the sums involved. "We have done very careful projections of sales and revenue," he said. "It's certainly not a loss leader. We expect to make money out of it, and we will be publishing in May."

Amis said last night: "The discussion of the sale of my book has been a distraction and of course I am sorry to be leaving Jonathan Cape, but I am pleased to be joining HarperCollins."

Books, pages 40-41

Eton chaplain condemns 'socialist' C of E

By Ruth Gledhill, Religion Correspondent

THE senior chaplain at Eton has condemned the Church of England as politically correct, left-wing and sectarian. In an analysis to be published in an insert in 100,000 parish magazines next month, the Rev John Witheridge, Conductor of Eton College, says that the church has become "increasingly divided into the secular and the socialist". He adds: "Women's rights, gay rights, black rights, bias to the poor; you name it, the church has supported it until Christian theology has begun to sound like sociology, and priests like social workers."

Of a certain background, the college is not "religiously" exclusive, he says. "It is not a Christian sect, like so many parishes. The chaplains at Eton minister not just to Christians but to the whole community." Mr Witheridge condemns particularly those parishes that operate "exclusive policies" for baptisms, marriages and even funerals. "If you are not a regular worshipper, if (in other words) you are not a card-carrying member of the club, you are not welcome to take advantage of these rites of passage."

He accuses other parishes of a swing to the opposite pole, where they adopt any promising item on the secular agenda, such as the family, to try to seem relevant. "Family services and family events have

come to dominate so much of parish life that you could be mistaken for thinking that Christianity and the human family are barely distinguishable. If you happen to be single, childless, divorced or widowed, you can easily be made to feel excluded from the gospel."

The chaplain adds: "Although I won't be any more popular for saying so, what we do at Eton is of enormous strategic importance. Whether people like it or not, many of the boys we teach and care for will go on to hold highly responsible positions in society. If they can take with them at least some real understanding and regard for Christian beliefs and values, the service we are doing for the next generation is incalculable."



Witheridge: "Priests are like social workers"



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Howard braces for defeat in crime compensation appeal



Howard: stout defence

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

MICHAEL HOWARD has told his Cabinet colleagues that he will have to bring in emergency legislation if he fails in his appeal to the House of Lords next month over the scheme he introduced last year to provide compensation for the victims of serious crime.

The Home Secretary would have to act to prevent a "continuing drain on our finances", according to a Whitehall document leaked last night. He admits that the new, less generous, scheme is saving the Government about £85 million a year. Mr Howard appears to accept in his letter that the measure might prove difficult to push through.

In a confidential letter to key Cabinet ministers, the Home Secretary

discloses that the Government has been told by its legal advisers that the odds of its winning its appeal to the Lords are about even. It is trying to overturn a Court of Appeal ruling that Mr Howard had acted unlawfully in bringing in the new system of flat-rate tariffs to compensate victims. The new contingency legislation proposed by Mr Howard in his leaked letter would put the tariff scheme on a statutory footing.

The Home Secretary had been accused by political opponents of showing contempt towards the victims of crime. He says that his preference — "if we could carry Parliament with us" — would be for a "broad enabling power", leaving the detail of the scheme to be set by regulation or order.

The Court of Appeal found that Mr Howard had abused his power

Ministerial principles 'made up on hoof'

The Home Secretary has been accused of making up constitutional principles on the hoof in an attempt to pass on blame for his department's failures to others. In a letter to *The Times* today Elizabeth Symons, general secretary of the First Division Association, says that Michael Howard "has no constitutional authority" for his claim that ministers are responsible for policy issues not operational matters. Ms Symons accuses him of "deliberately ignoring his own instructions as a minister or [of being] ignorant of them". *Letters, page 19*

ers by introducing the system without referring it to Parliament. Since the judgment, the new scheme has continued to operate pending an appeal.

In his letter Mr Howard wrote of the "serious implications" if the appeal goes against him. He says that if the judgment were to coincide with the end of the 1995-96 financial year, some 70,000 appli-

cations would have to be looked at afresh, creating immense administrative difficulties. However, the financial problems would be even more serious. Mr Howard admits that the extra cost of the old scheme, compared with his new tariffs, is about £7 million a month: so the cost of reinstating it would be some £85 million.

Mr Howard writes: "We shall

present a vigorous case to the House of Lords and are hopeful that we will win the case on its merits. But if we do not, then we shall need to take remedial action very quickly and aim to get correcting legislation on the statute book before the summer recess."

The Court of Appeal ruling was one of a series of blows to Mr Howard in recent months: since Christmas the escape from Parkhurst Prison and death of Frederick West, the accused mass-murderer, in custody has added to his troubles.

The Court of Appeal judgment was a victory for the Trades Union Congress and ten individual unions and staff associations representing firefighters, teachers, nurses, prison officers and others who face the threat of violence at work. They claimed the Home

Secretary was under an obligation to bring into force the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 which were intended to put the old compensation scheme on a statutory basis.

Sir Thomas Bingham, Master of the Rolls, said that while the 1988 provisions remained in force Mr Howard had not been legally free to exercise prerogative powers to set up a new scheme.

In the leaked letter Mr Howard advises colleagues against clawing back money from victims whose payments under the tariff scheme are higher than they would have been under the old scheme. While there is a presumption that over-payments should be recovered, he says, departments may waive recovery where there are exceptional circumstances. Such reasons would apply in this case, he says.

Lord Chancellor challenges belief that courts are best way to solve disputes

Mackay proposes wide reforms to cut legal aid costs

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS for a sweeping overhaul of the £1.3 billion legal aid scheme that would place law firms and advice agencies on fixed contracts within NHS-style cash limits were unveiled by the Lord Chancellor yesterday.

Lord Mackay of Clashfern outlined proposals for scrapping the present demand-led scheme set up in 1949 as one of the linchpins of the welfare state. He also wants to break the principle underpinning legal aid that lawyers and the courts are the best way of settling problems.

At the moment, "access to justice becomes co-terminous with access to lawyers," Lord Mackay said. Instead, people must be encouraged to make more use of other sources of help, such as law centres, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, mediation and arbitration services, he said.

"I am not attracted by the idea that the legal profession should have carte blanche to run for business, particularly under the green form scheme [advice on legal aid], simply as

a means of increasing turnover rather than as a means of meeting genuine and identified need."

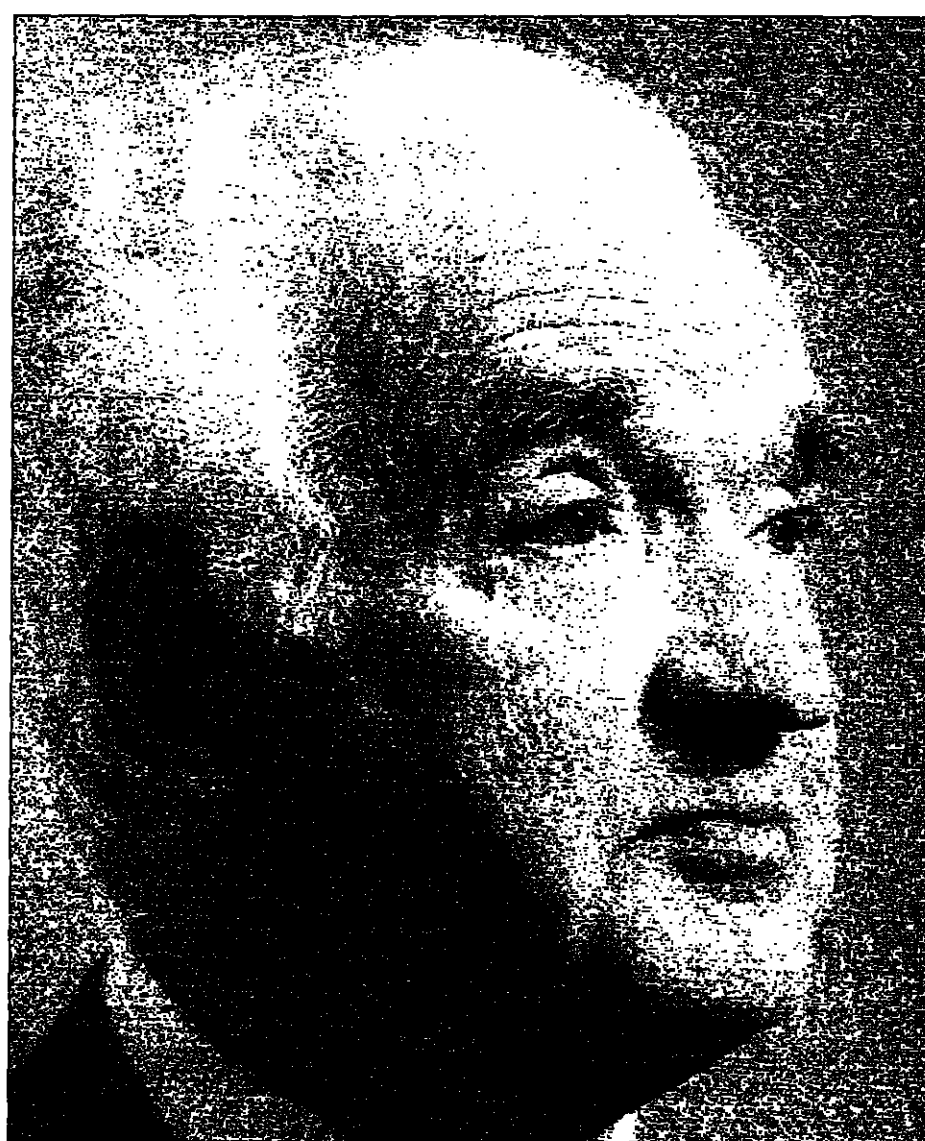
Under the proposals, law firms and advice agencies would be awarded contracts to undertake blocks of work in their parts of the country within fixed budgets, rather than being paid case by case. Contracts might be granted to individual law firms, or to a law firm linked with another or with advice centres, mediation or arbitration services, providing people with a "one-stop shop" in legal services.

Lord Mackay said that costs of legal aid had doubled since 1990 and were reaching the limit of what could be afforded. "The writing is on the wall. The growth in legal aid expenditure must be curbed." There was little in the legal aid scheme to encourage quality and efficiency, and it was rigid, channeling money to settling disputes in the courts when cheaper ways such as mediation might be used, he said. The scheme was "also increasingly under attack

from a variety of directions", he added. There were criticisms over legal aid going to the apparently wealthy, but the scheme also came under attack for failing to help all who needed it.

The Lord Chancellor was delivering a keynote speech at a seminar organised in London by the Social Market Foundation, the centre-right think-tank, which foreshadows a Green Paper he will publish by late Spring. His speech was aimed at fuelling debate rather than laying down policy. But he said that with legal aid having many enemies and few friends, the status quo could no longer be an option.

"The legal aid scheme as it exists today is not living up to the demands being placed upon it. There must be change," he said. "If anything, the present system makes it possible to create and exploit demand in ways which may not always be in the best interests either of the legal aid scheme or indeed of the clients concerned."



Mackay: not attracted by idea of the legal profession touting for business

Tesco plans to buy only British veal

Tesco is to stop buying Dutch veal because of the outcry over the export of British calves to the Continent. The supermarket chain hopes to obtain veal from the dairy farm owned by William Waldegrave, the Agriculture Minister. He was criticised for allowing his calves to be raised abroad. Marks and Spencer is the only major high street store still buying veal abroad.

While animal rights protesters have picketed Shoreham without halting livestock exports, and a group demonstrated yesterday at Swansea airport, from which Welsh farmers hope to export calves, up to 16 lorry loads of animals have been sailing nightly from Plymouth and a service from Brightlingsea in Essex is being planned.

Council limit lifted

The Government has announced the scrapping of the ceiling on allowances paid to councillors in England and Wales from April 1. David Curry, local government minister, disclosed he is to end curbs on the total amount councils can spend on payments to members. There will be no extra Whitehall cash. *Tories snubbed, page 10*

Oxford rent protest

Students accused Pembroke College, Oxford, yesterday of planning a return to the era of *Brideshead Revisited* with a 20 per cent rise on the annual £2,000 rent. Brian Schofield, junior common room president, said the college would become an upper-class preserve even if that meant being second-rate academically. *Oxbridge unites, page 5*

New vaccine centre

A major boost to British vaccine research was announced yesterday. A new institute, to be called the Edward Jenner Institute for Vaccine Research and funded by industry and government, is to be established at Compton in Berkshire to expand research into vaccines against human disease. Glaxo has promised £10 million to build the centre.

University pay-off cut

A £412,000 severance package for the outgoing vice-chancellor of Huddersfield University is to be cut by more than half. Professor Kenneth Durrands will retire at the end of this month. The Higher Education Funding Council for England blocked the original settlement last year but officials are understood to have cleared a £150,000 deal.

Belfast bomb found

Shoppers were evacuated from a branch of Woolworth's in central Belfast after an incendiary device was discovered in the shop. Army bomb experts dealt with the device, which contained some form of liquid and had been left at the store recently. The device, which was said to be crude and amateurish, was capable of igniting.

Parachute ruling

Tatiana Pond, 27, a barrister who died when she landed on the propeller of a taxiing aircraft at Headcorn Parachute Club in Kent, was held to be 50 per cent to blame for her death by a High Court judge, David Parker, her fiancé and owner of the club, had sought compensation from Miss Pond's estate for damage to the aircraft.

Au pair death arrest

Police hunting the killer of Suschita Jungblut, the Swiss au pair beaten to death in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, have arrested a man from Luton. Detectives are still trying to trace the hundreds of people who were at a nightclub near where the 22-year-old au pair's partially clothed body was found on Sunday morning.

Island musical closes

The West End musical *Once On This Island* is to close at the end of January after four months because of disappointing ticket sales. The Caribbean-style show had been a hit on Broadway, but the co-producer said it had been difficult to compete with long-running and well-known shows in London.

17 held in police raids

Police investigating protection rackets and violence in Merseyside's clubland raided more than 30 homes and businesses. Seventeen people were arrested during searches at homes in Merseyside, Cheshire, Derbyshire and Northumberland and two nightclubs. Police seized guns, drugs and £20,000 in cash.

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EC threat Tory move

Continued from page 1
difficult to get a positive vote next week. With 221 votes behind me, I am seriously worried for his nomination."

Klaus Hänsch, President of the European Parliament, said: "It can't be taken for granted that we will simply rubber-stamp the Commission. President Santer is expected to ... meet the demands that come from the parliament."

Mr Santer must now decide whether to risk a parliamentary "no" vote on Wednesday or allow members to undermine his authority. Parliamentary sources indicated that Mrs Greene's comments may have understated the strength of feeling among MEPs and that a "no" vote was a serious possibility.

Mrs Greene emphasised that the parliament's criticism did not relate to the entire Commission, but to a minority of commissioners and portfolios. She said MEPs would have blocked the nominations of two commissioners if they had the power to do so. They are believed to be Mr Flynn and Mrs Bierregaard, whose hearing was described as a disaster because she refused to give details of what policies she intended to enact, which was the whole purpose of the meeting.

If parliament did exercise its veto, the present caretaker administration set up by Jacques Delors, the former President, would remain in office until a new Commission were formally approved. As a result of a ruling by the Commission's own legal service, however, the caretaker group can deal only with emergencies, so the EU would be effectively out of operation during any such period.

At its maiden session last July, the parliament nearly vetoed Mr Santer's own nomination. He was approved only after Spanish socialist MEPs abstained.

Politics, page 11

Sir Nicholas Scott

Sir Nicholas Scott, Conservative MP for Chelsea, asks us to point out that, contrary to a report (January 4), he intends to seek adoption for any enlarged Chelsea seat at the next general election. We apologise for the error.

Continued from page 1
back into public ownership and he ridiculed the argument that Clause Four should remain in its present form but with new wording appended.

After the meeting several MEPs praised Mr Blair's combative stance, during which he pointed to the work of his predecessors, Neil Kinnock and John Smith, that had brought the party "off its knees". Although MEPs said Mr Blair was calm during delivery of his speech, Glenys Kinnock, MEP for South Wales East, left the meeting saying that he was "extremely angry at the way it was planned that maximum embarrassment was caused."

Wayne David, the leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party and MEP for South Wales Central, said that Mr Blair had made perfectly clear that he would not tolerate the type of open dissent such as was shown by the MEPs who placed their advertisement on the front page of Tuesday's *Guardian*. "I hope members have learnt from the mistake of placing the advertisement."

Leaders of the dissident MEPs were unrepentant. Mr Falconer, MEP for Mid-Scotland and Fife, denied that he and fellow members had been discourteous or infantile. "This is a healthy and progressive discussion in which no socialist should have anything to fear and from which the whole of Britain has a great deal to gain."

He warned Mr Blair that the campaign would continue until the special conference in April, which will decide on changes to Clause Four. "Once I start a campaign I do not stop," Mr Falconer added.

After the meeting Mr Blair said that it was important that he spoke bluntly about his views on an issue which he regarded as crucial to the future of the party. He was also adamant that the party had to be disciplined to win public support.

"I care about the Labour Party winning the next election. Our politics have got to be competent. We have got to be disciplined and we have got to be setting out for the British people the reasons why they can trust us to govern this country."

Politics, page 11
Leading article, page 19

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Christie's ordered to repay £700,000 for sale of forgery

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A HIGH Court judge ordered Christie's to pay almost £700,000 to a wealthy Swiss art dealer yesterday for a painting by Egon Schiele that she had bought at auction for £500,000 four years ago. He ruled that it was a forgery within the meaning of Christie's conditions.

Mr Justice Morison said that Marie Zelig de Balkany was entitled to a refund with interest on *Youth Kneeling Before God The Father* by Schiele (1890-1918), the Austrian Expressionist deeply inspired by Freudian psychology and best-known for his erotic imagery.

She bought it in Geneva in June, 1987, but the judge ordered Christie's to refund the money and the £57,500 buyer's premium, plus interest of more than £130,000. The firm is also faced with legal costs unofficially estimated at £100,000.

Mme de Balkany told the court that she had been "head

over heels in love" with the painting until four years later, she read a book that expressed doubt on its authenticity. Mme de Balkany recalled feeling "physically sick" and left "wondering what I had been sold".

She sent the painting to experts who declared it a forgery. The judge agreed that the signature was a forgery and "done with intent to deceive". A Christie's spokeswoman said: "We are disappointed, but are consulting counsel as to further action."

The case focused on whether the painting, including the initials "ES", had been so heavily overpainted by a restorer that little if any of the master's hand was visible. The catalogue described it as both painted and signed by him.

The judge concluded that it was only in the style of Schiele and that "someone had dressed it up to be a painting by Schiele". He added: "What Mme de Balkany bought was

a painting that was almost wholly made by an unknown person. It seems to me probable that the overpainter did not want it to be known that he had overpainted the picture to the extent he had."

He said: "What makes all the difference, as it seems to me, is the fact that this overpainter did seek to deceive people into thinking that what he had done had been done by Schiele."

Christie's argued that no amount of overpainting could make the painting a forgery if the overpainter followed the design of the original artist. To be a forgery, the painting had to pretend to be a Schiele when it was not.

The auctioneers have the support of Serge Sabarsky, a retired dealer in German and Austrian art who is one of the world's three leading Schiele scholars. Asked whether he still believed that the painting was genuine, he said: "I don't believe, I know. I have looked at Schiele for 50 years. It's a genuine Schiele, an original painting by Schiele that has been heavily over-restored and overpainted."

Mme de Balkany, who was not in court, said: "I am very pleased with the outcome. I am only sorry that Christie's felt it necessary to fight the action all the way to court."

She added: "It came as a surprise to me that Christie's argued that they owe no legal responsibility to customers who rely on the opinions that they express in their catalogues. I am sure there are many other customers who will find this contention difficult to accept."

Schiele's is also facing legal action over a Schiele and both cases could have major implications for the wording of catalogue entries.

The Sotheby's case concerns a watercolour of a crouching woman that was sold in 1983 to a London lawyer. According to *The Art Newspaper*, Sotheby's reproduced edited comments by Dr. Rudolph Leopold, another eminent Schiele scholar, but it is alleged that the catalogue omitted his doubts that certain features of the drawing were by the artist.



The "Schiele" that the High Court ruled was fake

Girl, 13, abducted by sex attacker with baby in car

By KATE ALDERSON

DETECTIVES are searching for a sex attacker who abducted a teenage girl and tried to strangle her while he had a baby strapped into the back of his car.

The 13-year-old girl was grabbed from her bicycle, forced into the boot of the car, taken to a house and subjected to a 4½-hour ordeal. Police said yesterday that they were concerned for the safety of the baby. They feared that the attacker may strike again.

The girl, from Merseyside, has described how the man drove the car for about an

hour across rough roads, stopped to open a gate, then drove on to a gravel area near the house. The girl was carried into a kitchen with a shiny wooden block floor and fitted units with antique metal handles. She was taken to a bedroom, past a white baby gate at the top of the stairs, and assaulted. She remembers a double bed with cream sheets and a cream flowered duvet. Police believe the baby, who had white-blond hair and was between six months and a year old, remained in the car during the attack. The girl was

abandoned near the M56 Altrincham interchange. A lorry driver found her and took her to a service station. She suffered severe injuries.

Police describe the attacker as 5ft 10in tall, stocky and clean-shaven, with a local accent and dark brown, short, gelled-back hair. His car is believed to be a five-door Vauxhall Cavalier hatchback.

Detective Inspector Neil Johnson, who is leading the inquiry, said: "I find it astonishing that someone could do this while looking after a child."

Play shuts as actor heads west

A HIT West End play is closing for two days next week at a cost of £20,000 so that its star, Nigel Hawthorne, can promote his film *The Madness of King George*.

The film-maker Sam Goldwyn is to compensate the producers of *The Claudine Marriage* for lost revenue while Hawthorne heads a publicity drive in America.

In the film Hawthorne repeats his acclaimed role as a deranged monarch preyed upon by doctors, first seen at the National Theatre three years ago. The film has not yet opened in Britain but has been well received in America and Hawthorne is being tipped as a nominee for the best actor Oscar.

Performances of *The Claudine Marriage* at Queen's Theatre are being cancelled on Monday and Tuesday while Hawthorne, 65, dashes to New York. An intensive publicity campaign in the US media is regarded as essential if Hawthorne is to stand a chance in the Oscars.

The actor co-stars with Helen Mirren and Rupert Everett in the film, which is directed by Nicholas Hytner.



Fashion is fun — official

IAN R. WEBB ON WHY ANNA SUI IS THE TOAST OF NEW YORK

IN THE
MAGAZINE

THE GOOD SELF-CATERING
HOLIDAY GUIDE

WEEKEND

Residents defeat parking permits as 'wealth tax'

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

RESIDENTS of an affluent area have won a High Court battle to prevent the council charging them for parking permits, which they said were effectively a "tax on the rich".

Camden Council wanted to create a controlled residents' parking zone in Primrose Hill, north London. Although half of Camden already has such zones and other London boroughs operate similar schemes, the move aroused strong feelings among the 3,000-strong community.

Ten residents, including the former Downing Street caterer Clare Latimer, took the council to court claiming the scheme, which would have cost each motorist £82 a year, was illegal and was intended as a tax on wealthy households.

They said the council's motivation came more from its desire to raise money rather than to improve parking, and argued that they would effectively be paying a levy to subsidise the council's social services budget and concessionary travel fares.

Yesterday Mr Justice McCullough ruled that the council had not conducted "fair and effective" consultation with residents' groups and said the scheme should be considered afresh. The authority was not legally entitled to use parking orders to raise revenue generally, the judge said. Ms Latimer said



Woodrow: parking a difficult subject

she was delighted by the outcome. "We do want a parking scheme but not the one Camden Council proposed."

"The business people and residents of Primrose Hill would have been penalised by this scheme and I would have had to move because of the cost," he said.

The council was ordered to pay 75 per cent of the residents' legal costs, unofficially estimated at about £25,000. Brian Woodrow, vice-chair of Camden Council's environment committee, said: "Local authorities generally have a very difficult task in dealing with the problems of parking."



Clare Latimer leaving the High Court after the residents' victory

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THE TIMES THURSDAY JANUARY 12 1995

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Oxbridge unites to challenge club that shuns women

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND BEN PRESTON

THE heads of Oxford and Cambridge colleges are uniting behind an unprecedented legal challenge against the historic London club which bears their name in protest at its treatment of women.

Legal advice is being sought after the failure of a protest letter by the college principals to force the United Oxford and Cambridge University Club to grant women full membership. Senior university officials are threatening to challenge the club's right to use the universities' crests.

Further resignations are expected to follow that of David Butler, the political scientist, who disclosed in *The Times* yesterday that after 43 years he was leaving the club that his great-grandfather had helped to found in 1817.

The Pall Mall club's refusal to acknowledge the clamour for change within academic

circles has been a source of increasing irritation for several years. One senior academic said yesterday: "The universities are being brought into increasing disrepute by their association with such a chauvinist institution."

However, reformers fear that the old guard at the club will "dig in their heels" after the resignation of Dr Butler, a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford. One senior member said yesterday that possible concessions to women might be withdrawn as part of a backlash against his decision to go public.

Women are allowed to enter certain parts of the building as guests or associate members only. The club's committee is discussing proposals to open the marble staircase, library and members' bar. The senior member said: "The committee might now decide that it

cannot appear to give in as a result of one don."

Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn, the Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, warned the club to move into the 20th century. He said: "I will have to review my own position as a member. The position of the club has become untenable."

The club has been an admirable institution but it is a pity it has fallen into bad ways. This has been discussed by many heads of houses. It's clear that the majority think the position is unacceptable."

The debate about allowing women to become full members has become increasingly acrimonious. A ballot of the 3,682 members in September 1993 ended in a narrow vote for the pro-women lobby after 1,853 votes against 575. Supporters of the status quo changed the procedures to require that a majority of paid-up members vote for change, which reformers claim makes the target almost impossible.

But yesterday a member of 44 years standing rejected the claim that the club committee was impervious to the will of members. Abstainers were in effect voting no, he said. The member, a former civil servant who did not want to be named, said: "If members find it more pleasurable to have a single-sex atmosphere, then why should they change? If you like to drink lemonade, why should you have to drink orangeade?"

Ruth Deech, principal of St Anne's College, Oxford, who resigned 14 months ago after being given honorary associate member status as a college head, said: "Women are not welcome and there is an atmosphere of distaste and exclusion. But the real problem is this club is exploiting its association with two universities that have been co-educational for decades."

Gordon Buchanan, secretary of the university club, said: "The going on of this club are private." Gerald Bowden, the club chairman and former Tory MP for Dulwich, was unavailable for comment.

Members drag feet on path to equality

BY ANDREW PIERCE

LONDON'S clubland has been resisting pressure to lower the banner of male chauvinism and allow women members for years. One of the oldest clubs, the Garrick, founded in 1831, had the most celebrated challenge to its men-only rule in July 1992. Derek Nimmo, the actor, a member for 23 years, led the successful rearguard action.

He said yesterday: "It is a gentlemen's club formed for actors and men of education to meet on equal terms, not for ladies. There have been hen clubs but they flourished because women don't like each other's company."

The Travellers' Club, formed in 1819, also excludes women members. However, women from reciprocal clubs are allowed in but barred from the Smoking Room and Cocktail Bar.

The Saville Club, established in 1868, is similarly

opposed to women. It has regularly defied the march of progress. For some 20 years after the invention of the telephone members resolutely refused to have one installed. Women guests are not advised to enter the Morning Room when "gentlemen" are reading.

The Reform Club, established in 1836, and where Pheasant Fogg, Jules Verne's fictitious traveller, stopped off during his epic voyage around the world, is one of the few in St James's to allow women to join. For the past decade they have been admitted on equal terms.

Boodles, London's second oldest club, whose members include the Prince of Wales, briefly flirted with women, but it was reported last week that the experiment to allow them into the saloon for midweek dinner parties had been cancelled. Boodles, established in 1764, also resists the lure of women. They are admitted only after 6pm.



Dawn Jones, wife of Colin Jones, who spotted the fugitives, speaks out yesterday

Parkhurst staff in walkout over jail transfers

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

PRISON officers and other staff at Parkhurst jail walked out yesterday in protest at the removal of the governor and six officers after the escape of three men.

More than 120 officers and staff spent thirty minutes outside the jail at lunchtime while assurances were sought that their strong feelings would be passed to Michael Howard.

Terry McLaren, a member of the national executive of the Prison Officers' Association, said: "They asked me to speak to Mr Robin Walker [acting governor] to relay their anger at what had happened, in particular to the five prison officer colleagues who were blamed in the Commons on Tuesday over the escape. They felt the individuals were being made scapegoats and didn't think the prison had been dealt with fairly."

The walkout occurred as prison governors were considering a legal challenge to the decision to remove John Marriott as head of Parkhurst after the escape by two murderers and an arsonist.

A meeting of the Prison Governors' Association (PGA) executive today will look at whether the association should launch judicial review proceedings against the decision, which has provoked dismay among governors in 133 jails. Leaders of the PGA say the decision to order Mr



Colin Jones: transfer

Marriott to non-operational duties breaches the Prison Service's procedures and has prejudiced the outcome of any further inquiries.

Mr Marriott and other governors are particularly furious at the language used by Mr Howard in the Commons.

Colin Jones, 28, one of the prison officers to be transferred and the man who gave police the vital information that led to the recapture of the three escapees, is devastated by the decision, according to his wife, Dawn. She condemned the way in which he had been treated.

Four prison officers at the medium-security Bullingdon jail, near Bicester, Oxfordshire, needed hospital treatment yesterday after being attacked by inmates angry over a security clampdown.

Woman pilot 'endured relentless harassment'

BY RICHARD DUCE

THE only woman pilot in an airline was singled out for a campaign of sexual harassment by male colleagues who turned her job into a "living nightmare" before she was eventually sacked, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Sandra Valentine, 36, who had funded her own training, was one of 178 pilots flying for Airtours. Soon after starting work at Birmingham airport in August 1992 she was picked on by chauvinistic colleagues. It was claimed. The tribunal in Birmingham heard that Ms Valentine endured propositions and insults from airline staff in front of passengers. She was also sent pornography.

Ms Valentine, from Knowle, near Solihull, told the tribunal that her chief

pilot made suggestive remarks to her while they were away on a training course shortly after she joined the company.

"He asked if I was pleased to be based in Birmingham and then told me it wasn't convenient for him as he was a married man and it would have been easier for him to see me if I had been in Manchester," she said.

She claimed he then said he did not want her all to himself but would give her as a surprise Christmas present to one of his friends.

Jane McNeill, for Ms Valentine, who is claiming sexual discrimination against Airtours and the chief pilot, said her client had initially complained about her treatment but when nothing was done became "far too wary of being

branded a whinger so she kept silent and just got on with her job as best as she could."

Mrs McNeill said: "During the course of her employment, from beginning to end, she was subjected to a relentless onslaught of sexual harassment and discrimination, culminating in her dismissal on December 2, 1993. She said that Ms Valentine was sacked after a "false and biased report by a senior pilot led her to fail her twice-yearly piloting check". "The report was deliberately false and so biased as to give a wholly misleading impression of her flying abilities. No man would have been dismissed for such a failure."

Ms Valentine has been unemployed since she lost her job. The hearing continues.



Valentine: lone woman

The Private Life of Plants an illustrated lecture by Sir David Attenborough

READERS of *The Times*

are invited to attend an illustrated lecture by Sir David Attenborough on "The Private Life of Plants", organised in conjunction with Dillons the Bookstore, on Wednesday, January 25, at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, at 7.30pm.

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Soldier mistook officer for target in night exercise

BY EMMA WILKINS

A PARATROOPER who fatally wounded an officer during a mock battle had thought he was firing at a target, an inquest was told yesterday.

Lance Corporal Jonathan Scrivener fired two bursts of 15 rounds from his semi-automatic rifle, hitting Captain Christopher Kelly, 26, in the chest. Captain Kelly, of the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, died a month later in Guy's Hospital, London.

His parents, Suzanne and Denis, who are considering legal action against the Ministry of Defence over their son's death, attended the hearing at Southwark Coroner's Court with their sons, Paul, 23, and David, 22.

Mrs Kelly wept as Lance Corporal Scrivener, who was then a private, told the inquest: "I looked in my sight for a couple of seconds and I thought I saw one target next to a tree. Unless you are told there will be nothing out there friendly. Everything needs to be taken out. Immediately after I fired the rounds, I went to put in a fresh magazine but I didn't have one. I then heard screams of 'Stop, Stop'."

Corporal Michael Whordley, the safety officer responsible for Lance Corporal Scrivener during the night exercise in Kenya, said the rules had been correctly followed. Just seconds before his death Captain Kelly had requested a ceasefire over his radio when he saw the green marker lights of armed troops directly in front of his eight-man anti-tank unit. "Almost at

the same time as he [Scrivener] was firing, the message came across 'Stop, be aware - anti-tanks to the front.' Corporal Whordley told the inquest. "As he fired, I realised what he had fired at. Looking back, I thought it was odd that he had established the target so quickly."

Two other soldiers were seriously injured in the incident. Lance Corporal Alan Williams, who was shot in the hand and lost two fingers, told the inquest that bullets had ricocheted off his rifle after Captain Kelly had ordered him to lie on the ground. "The firing went on for a second or two. I could hear a lot of people shouting stop. I could hear people shouting that Captain Kelly had been hit and that was when I got hit," he said.

The inquest was adjourned until today.



Kelly: died a month after being shot

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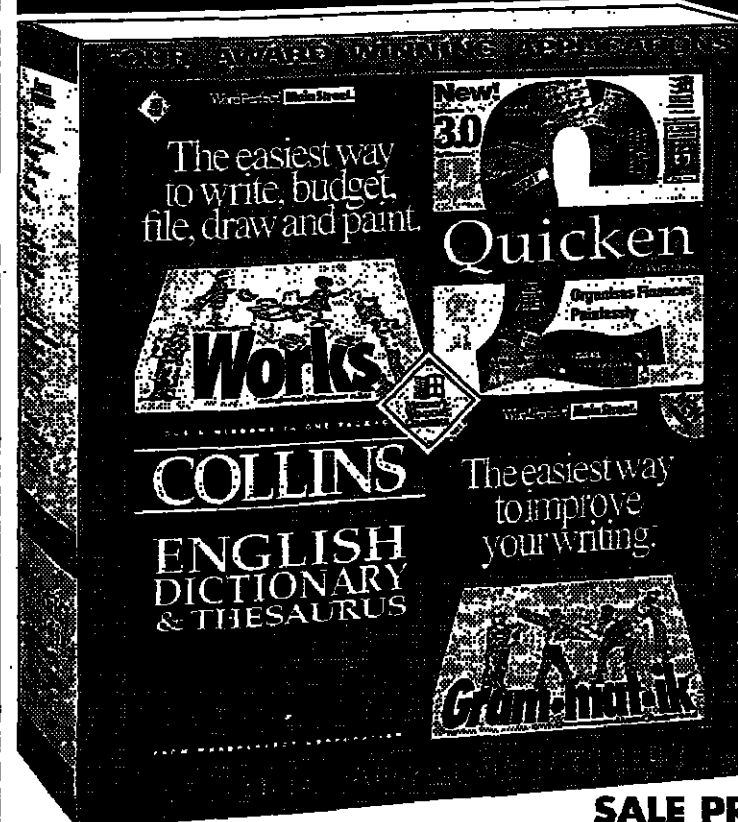
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Every year thousands receive that comfort from Childline, the charity set up by Esther Rantzen.

But many more fail to get the help they need. Not because Childline does not want to aid them but because it cannot.

Yesterday a court heard how an 11-year-old girl fell through the safety net even though she suffered 14 months of rape and other sexual abuse.

Fifteen times she rang the Childline number and each time she only got through to an answering machine.

Yet Childline is not to blame. The number of calls it answers increases all the time, with more volunteers trained and more phone lines being added.

But that all costs money and Childline just does not have enough.

The Government cannot allow this tragic situation to continue. There can be no better use for taxpayers' money than helping abused children.

It must find the cash that Childline requires to open all the lines it needs. If it refuses, then the lottery organisers should shame it by providing funds.

It is bad enough that children suffer. Worse still that they suffer more for Childline's want of money.

Daily Mirror 6/1/95

Childline too busy for raped girl

By Lucy Berrington

A PAEDOPHILE was jailed for eight years yesterday after his victim described how she suffered abuse for more than a year because she had been able, on 15 occasions, to get through only to the answering machine of the charity helpline, Childline. The abuse of the girl, 11, was discovered after she wrote a "letter" to herself which was found by a family friend, who told the girl's father.

The girl had written: "I have tried phoning Childline but it is always on the answering machine." Winchester Crown Court was told. "My mother doesn't believe me. I have decided to write it down."

David Woodnutt, 34, of Totton, Southampton, admitted rape, attempted buggery and two offences of indecent assault on the girl between March 1993 and May 1994.

A spokeswoman for Childline, said the charity, which was "heartbroken about the case" received 10,000 calls a day but had resources to answer only 3,000.

The Times 6/1/95

Agony of ChildLine girl crying out to be heard

By TRACEY HARRISON

ESTHER Rantzen admitted last night that only three out of every ten calls to ChildLine are answered.

She was defending the helpline she launched after it emerged that a young sex abuse victim failed to get through 15 times.

The 11-year-old girl gave up in despair after getting the answer machine message every time she phoned. Meanwhile, the horrific assaults on her continued.

Last night, after the man who subjected the girl to a 14-month ordeal was jailed for eight years, Miss Rantzen acknowledged that the charity's failure to reach every child crying out for help, despite an annual income of \$4million.

"I am desperately upset that we were not able to help this little girl," she said. "I am so sorry she was unable to reach our counsellors. It is a haunting image."

She said a lack of funds limited the charity's work. Of 10,000 calls

each day, only 3,000 were answered — although this was an improvement on the early days, when only one in ten got through.

The girl turned to ChildLine while being abused by unemployed David Woodnutt, Winchester Crown Court heard yesterday. But each time she heard only the answer machine urging youngsters to keep trying to get through.

Her mother did not believe her complaints and, in her misery, the girl wrote a heartbreaking note to herself, which was read out in court.

It said: "I'm scared, because I'm being sexually abused. I have tried phoning ChildLine but it is always on the answering machine."

"My mother doesn't believe me. I have tried to get the man out of my head and have decided to

write it down. I have tried the Childline number 15 times. I have been counting."

Anthony Davies, prosecuting, said the girl's ordeal came to light when a family friend found her note and told her father.

He took her for a walk and she told him the whole story. The girl told police that Woodnutt, 34, had abused her over 14 months.

Woodnutt, of Stanley Road, Totton, Southampton, admitted rape, an attempted serious sexual offence and two charges of indecent assault.

Isolated

Christopher Wing, defending, said he was a "solitary and isolated man with no friends. He had suffered manic depression."

Judge Michael Broderick told Woodnutt: "These offences are serious. I cannot give you credit for your plea of guilty because it was so late in the day. Since November last year this little girl

of tender years has been steeling herself to give evidence."

Miss Rantzen added: "We are only too aware that there are desperate children who might be trying to get through and can't."

"We are expanding as fast as we can and cases like this drive us on. But it is a matter of what we can afford to do."

"If children cannot get through they can write to us at our Free-post address. If they give us a confidential address we will write back. Our counsellors can, and do, write back."

"We think we have to be three times the size we are now for all the children who need us to be able to get through. That is our ambition."

Another spokesman for the charity said: "We would certainly hope that it was unusual for any child to ring 15 times without success."

"But certain times of the day, such as after school and early evening, are particularly busy."

Daily Mail 6/1/95

In 1994 ChildLine helped 81,543 children.
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No child should have to suffer the way this young girl suffered. But why wasn't ChildLine able to help? After all, we helped 81,543 other children last year.

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Scientists stumble on secret galaxies in darkest space

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

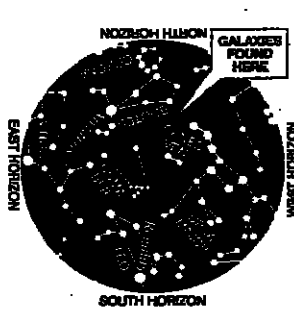
ASTRONOMERS exploring what was believed to be an empty quarter of the sky have discovered 50 galaxies. The Bootes Void, 700 million light years from Earth and 500 times the size of the Milky Way, was thought to be empty of stars. It turns out there are plenty there, but they are too dim to be easily spotted.

Dr Greg Aldering of the University of Minnesota told a meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Tucson, Arizona, that together with astronomers from Harvard University, the University of Oregon and the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory, he had used telescopes in Arizona and California to conduct a search at a magnitude of 18.

"It was a region that was thought to be totally devoid of any galaxies," he said. "We've surveyed two thirds of it now and have found 50."

"The team's success comes because earlier searches had been limited to objects of magnitude 16. Magnitude numbers increase as brightness of an object decreases. A magnitude of 5 is about the brightest star that can be seen with the naked eye.

Despite the new discoveries, the Bootes Void, whose position in the sky is near the handle of the Big Dipper, is still relatively uncrowded. "It has only about a third of the



material that is average for such an area," Dr Aldering said. The Virgo cluster, just seven million light years across, has 1,000 galaxies.

Dr Aldering said voids had a particular fascination for astronomers because of the mystery of their origin. It is believed that the process that leads to large empty areas began shortly after the Big Bang, the moment when, according to many scientists, the universe began. The voids could have originated as small vacant areas that then grew rapidly as the universe expanded.

"The void could actually expand faster than other areas because it has less matter and the gravity effects are smaller," Dr Aldering said.

Bootes, a constellation in the northern sky, is said to have been named after a herdsman who invented the ox-drawn plough. For this he was pro-

moted to the heavens. The constellation is supposed to represent a man holding a crook and driving the Great Bear, Ursa Major, which lies close by. The seven brightest stars in Ursa Major are the Plough, or Big Dipper; the Bootes Void lies close to the handle of the Plough.

In a separate presentation at the same meeting, another scientific team said that it had discovered a new class of galaxies, miniature spiral galaxies, the same shape as the Milky Way, but only about a tenth as large.

Dr James Schombert of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory said that the new galaxies ranged from 7,000 to 10,000 light years in diameter, while the Milky Way was roughly 80,000 light years across. The dwarf spirals had evaded detection previously because of their dimness, he said.



Mr Diggle leaving the Law Society disciplinary hearing in London yesterday

Tribunal bans sex assault case solicitor for year

By Kathryn Knight

ANGUS DIGGLE, the solicitor convicted of the attempted rape of a fellow lawyer, was suspended from practising for a year by a disciplinary hearing yesterday.

Mr Diggle, 38, from Bolton, Lancashire, faced being struck off or a heavy fine from the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal after admitting a charge of unbecoming conduct. Speaking through his solicitor after the hearing, Mr Diggle said he was "extremely pleased and relieved" at the decision.

Mr Diggle was convicted for attempted rape in 1993, in what Geoffrey Williams, for the Law Society, described as the most serious case of a solicitor's misconduct in private life ever to come before the tribunal. The Law Society is now considering an appeal against the tribunal decision.

Mr Diggle was found guilty of attempted rape by an Old Bailey jury in 1993. He had taken a friend to a St Andrew's Day ball in Mayfair and had later jumped on her, wearing only frilly cuffs and a condom, as she slept at a friend's flat.

He claimed that the woman had invited him to have sex by undressing in front of him. Mr Diggle was jailed for three years and was released on September 30 last year after serving one year of his sentence.

The tribunal was also told that Mr Diggle had been fined £50 by Manchester magistrates in 1992 for harassing a young woman on a local train.

Michael Borrelli, for Mr Diggle, said that he had already been punished for his offence. "He has had to live with the consequences of that conviction," he said. He had erred in his private life and had shown a degree of sexual naivety. "The general reputation of the solicitors' profession is far more damaged by cases of dishonesty or negligence of a professional nature."

Mr Borrelli said that Mr Diggle, who has not worked as a solicitor since 1990, had been unable to find employment since his conviction, but hoped to return to either private practice or employment as a solicitor.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By Robert Sheehan, Bridge Correspondent

Third hand play

In each of the following suit lay-outs, you are East, sitting over the dummy. Against a No-Trump contract your partner leads the two and the three is played from dummy. What card should you play?

- (1) 7 6 3 K Q 8
(2) 7 6 3 K J 8
(3) J 8 3 Q 10 9
(4) J 8 3 Q 10 4

The reason I am discussing this in my refresher column is to remind you of third hand's play from sequences. No doubt you know that if you have K Q x it is right to lead the king, and with Q 10 9 you lead the ten — that is to say if you have a sequence you lead the top of it. (The 10 9 in the Q 10 9 holding is known as an interior sequence.)

But third in hand you should play the bottom of a sequence. This enables your

partner to deduce various things about the declarer's holding. Correct play on the above combinations is as follows:

1. Play the queen. If your partner has not got the jack he will know the declarer has it — if you had held the jack as well as the queen you would have played the jack. Partner will still be in the dark as to who has the king. Incidentally, when people discussing hands with me call jacks knaves I ask "why do they have a letter J in the corner?" Even Jeremy Flint came round to "jack".
2. Play the king. Now if your partner has not got the queen he will know the declarer has it.
3. You play the nine. If the declarer wins the trick with the ace or king, your partner can tell that you must have the ten.
4. You play the ten. If your partner has not got the nine, he can tell that the declarer must have it.

KEENE on CHESS

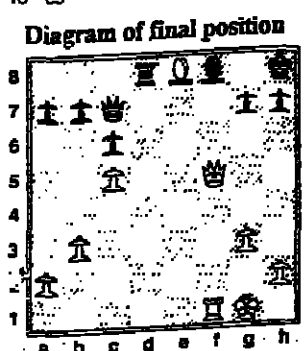
By Raymond Keene, Chess Correspondent

Master Writer

Grandmaster Harry Golombek OBE, chess correspondent of The Times from 1945 to 1985 who died at the weekend was noted equally for his lucid writing on chess, which could bring the drama of the games alive, as for his play over the board. His masterpiece was his book Reti's Games of Chess and the following game, with his flank developments of White's bishops, was his favourite.

White: Reti
Black: Bogolyubov
New York, 1924

- Reti Opening
- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1 Nf3 | Nf6 |
| 2 d4 | e5 |
| 3 g3 | d5 |
| 4 Bg2 | Bd6 |
| 5 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 6 B3 | Rd8 |
| 7 Bc2 | Nc7 |
| 8 c4 | c5 |
| 9 Nf2 | Ne4 |
| 10 Nxe4 | dxc4 |
| 11 Ne5 | is |
| 12 B3 | exf3 |
| 13 Bxf3 | Qc7 |
| 14 Nc7 | Bd7 |
| 15 e4 | e5 |
| 16 c5 | B8 |



Torre Attack

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 1 d4 | Nf6 |
| 2 Nf3 | b6 |
| 3 Bg5 | Ne4 |
| 4 B4 | Bb7 |
| 5 Ng5 | Nag5 |
| 6 Bg5 | is |
| 7 B4 | e6 |
| 8 e3 | is |
| 9 Nc2 | Bc6 |
| 10 Bc6 | 0-0 |
| 11 Bc2 | Bd3 |
| 12 B3 | Nc5 |
| 13 Qx6 | d5 |
| 14 c3 | b5 |
| 15 0-0-0 | Ne5 |
| 16 Kb1 | Qb6 |
| 17 Rf1 | 14 |
| 18 g4 | b4 |
| 19 ex4 | bxc3 |
| 20 Ka1 | Rac3 |
| 21 bxc3 | Qc8 |
| 22 is | Qa4 |
| 23 Rg3 | Rc6 |
| 24 Re1 | Rc8 |
| 25 Qd3 | Rd8 |
| 26 Re2 | Rd6 |
| 27 Rg1 | Qc6 |
| 28 Re3 | Qc4 |
| 29 c4 | Nb3+ |
| 30 Nc4 | |
- White resigns

Winning Move, page 48

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'If you came across an officer used for bayonet practice, you could not forget either'

Veterans welcome Japanese absence from VJ-Day events

By JOHN YOUNG

JAPAN will not be represented at this year's ceremonies in Britain to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Far East, the Prime Minister confirmed yesterday.

Invitations have been sent to more than 50 heads of state and government, including those of Germany and Italy, to attend the events marking VE-Day, the end of the war in Europe, from May 6 to 8. The Japanese Ambassador has been invited. But John Major said the VJ-Day commemorations, on August 19 and 20, would be an occasion for the nation and the Commonwealth to give thanks and to remember solemnly the sacrifices of the wartime generation.

Confirmation that there would be no Japanese in attendance was welcomed by veterans and former prisoners of war. Air Vice-Marshal Sir Bernard Chacksfield, chairman of the Burma Star Association, said: "I am hoping to get 10,000 of our members on parade on August 19, but I know that if a Japanese contingent was present, not a single man would turn out."

He said that many veterans, especially those who were prisoners of war, had endured such terrible experiences at the hands of the Japanese that

MAIN EVENTS

May 6: opening ceremony in Hyde Park. Reception at Guildhall for heads of state.
May 7: service of thanksgiving and reconciliation at St Paul's Cathedral. Young people's concert and ceremony in Hyde Park.

May 8: public holiday, and families day in Hyde Park. Queen to light first of chain of beacons across Europe. Princes Trust concert.

August 19: charity procession and veterans' parade in London.

August 20: church services across country.

Hundreds of other events are planned locally and street parties will be encouraged.

they could never forget. "If you came across an officer with barbed wire round his neck and 17 stab wounds through his body where he had been used for bayonet practice, you could not forget either."

"I am a Christian and I can forgive a lot. But the feeling among our veterans is that the Japanese in war were very different from the Germans, whom we can always forgive."

Harold Payne, president of the National Federation of Far

Eastern Prisoners of War, said after hearing the announcement at the Banqueting House in London: "I am very satisfied by the Prime Minister's assurance, because my members would have been very upset if the Japanese took any part in the event."

Mr Payne, who served in the Royal Artillery and was captured in Singapore in 1942, said: "We will be there to give thanks for our lives. If they hadn't dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we would have been gone. The Japs had told us that they would dispose of us if the Allies were forced to invade the mainland. I am not ashamed to say that I can neither forgive nor forget."

Renee Cumberbatch, 76, whose husband Leslie was a businessman in Shanghai, was sent with her baby daughter to a camp outside the city after its capture by the Japanese. "They wrecked our lives. We lost everything. How can we forgive?"

Mr Major said that the commemoration plans had been discussed with the governments of Germany and Japan, which were "very happy" with the arrangements. "The commemorations mark one of the most remarkable events not only in the history of these islands but in the history of the world."

"Untold millions died, servicemen and civilians alike. Some of man's greatest aesthetic achievements were destroyed. In the end, however, tyranny lost. Liberty would not have been possible in Eastern Europe nor, if we had lost, in Western Europe either. It is for all these reasons that it is absolutely right to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary," he said.

Lord Cranborne, Leader of the House of Lords and the minister responsible for the events, said: "We have been in very close contact with our Japanese friends over what was bound to be a very delicate matter."

Anniversary plans, page 1



The close relationship of Roosevelt and Churchill is captured in Lawrence Holford's sculpture, to be sited in London

Sculpture reunites wartime allies

By ALAN HAMILTON AND MARIANNE DARCH

"GIVE us the tools," Winston Churchill told Franklin Roosevelt in a memorable radio broadcast in February 1941. "and we will finish the job." The tools arrived, in the shape of lend-lease, and the job was indeed finished.

The remarkable rapport between the two leaders is to be commemorated in an unusually informal statue, to be unveiled in the West End of London in time for the VE-Day celebrations in May. The work of Lawrence Holford, the sculpture will show the pair in relaxed conversation on a park bench, and will be sited in New Bond Street in such a way that passers-by may sit and join them.

Entitled *Allies*, the work celebrates a partnership between two statesmen who



The wartime leaders meeting on board the battleship Prince of Wales in August 1941

came to have a huge regard for each other. Churchill, who had cultivated the friendship before hostilities began, held a famous meeting with Roosevelt on the battleship *Prince of Wales* off Newfoundland in 1941. The British leader was reportedly as excited as a schoolboy at the prospect of

the encounter. Churchill displayed such an enthusiasm for the New World that Americans saw him as an exception to the stiffness of the British ruling class.

Holford, who lives on the Isle of Wight, said yesterday: "I chose the subject because the two men brought us successfully through the

world war but have never been honoured together."

In 1940, when Britain stood alone, Roosevelt, facing a presidential election and allegations that he had entered a secret war pact with Britain, attacked the "fantastic misstatement" that his administration had "secretly entered into agreements with foreign nations". He conceded that, only a month before, he had had a secret meeting with Churchill. Within five months, he had signed the lend-lease deal which kept Britain supplied with vital war material, to be paid for when the conflict was over.

Rosamund Monckton, chairman of the Bond Street Association, which has bought the sculpture, said it was a lasting celebration of peace. "It is humanity: two very great figures, relaxing, who were architects of world peace."



John Major yesterday announcing events to mark the end of the war in Europe and Japan

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Acquitted man denied gun licence

A BUSINESSMAN cleared two years ago of plotting to murder his wife lost his appeal against a magistrate's refusal to grant him a gun licence yesterday after a judge said he was "a danger to public and peace".

Timothy Tindall, 30, a former gamekeeper who had given the Duke of Kent shooting tips on the royal estate at Sandringham, Norfolk, was "unfit to be entrusted with a firearm", Judge Myerson, QC, said in his appeal ruling at Leeds Crown Court that Mr Tindall, of Wakefield, West Yorkshire, had been accused of approaching a human intended to cause his second wife Helen death or injury. Mr Tindall was acquitted of conspiracy to murder in December 1992 after it was disclosed that a detective investigating the allegations was having an affair with the businessman's first wife, a witness in the case.

Mr Tindall, who spent 12 months in custody awaiting trial, intends to pursue civil claims against West Yorkshire police for false imprisonment and falsification of evidence. The judge said that Mr Tindall should not be allowed to possess a shotgun because of the danger to the public which was inherent with defects in his personality.

Sailor shocked by size of Navy fine

A PETTY officer based at Portsmouth in Hampshire was fined £17,000 by a court martial yesterday for fiddling £193 on his expenses. The fine is believed to be the largest imposed by a service court.

Mark Bostock, 33, from Eastney, Hampshire, admitted four charges of forging signatures on travel claim forms.

Bostock, who is to leave the Navy shortly, had faced being discharged and losing his pension benefits and a redundancy package estimated to be worth £54,000. He had stood to gain £48.49 from each of the four false expenses claims he filed in October last year, but

he was found out before any money was paid. Bostock, based at HMS Nelson, also admitted entering a non-existent address on the travel claim forms as his stated destination.

The court martial panel said that Bostock's 15 years' previous "unblemished service" had been taken into account in deciding that he should be allowed to remain in the service to the end of his term.

Bostock's lawyer, David Lancaster, said his client was considering an appeal against the size of the fine. "The overall result of avoiding dismissal from the service was a good one for my client because he retained his redundancy package, but the size of the fine did come as a bit of a shock."

Bostock, who is married with a two-year-old child, is to begin an engineering course at Portsmouth University next month. He said after the verdict: "To be honest I was quite pleased with the result and am grateful to the Navy. I know the fine is large but I expected to be dismissed the service and that would have been a nightmare."

"I would have lost the whole of my redundancy money, not just £17,000. I have enjoyed my time in the Navy. I did what I did in a moment of madness."



Bostock: allowed to work out his service

Wild West enthusiast shot first at police

Police fired five shots at a cowboy enthusiast who had opened fire on them, hitting him twice, an inquest at Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, was told yesterday. Robert Dixon, 44, was hit in the chest and hip. It was found later that his revolver was a replica, and that he had fired five blanks at officers.

The inquest was adjourned to await a report by Detective Chief Superintendent Geoffrey Ogden, who is leading the Police Complaints Authority investigation into the shooting on December 27.

Liner launch

The Queen is to name a new 2,000-passenger liner at Southampton in April. P&O's *Oriana*, nearing completion in a German shipyard, is capable of 25 knots, has 2.5 acres of deck space and the largest swimming pool afloat. Initially she will cruise around Europe and the Caribbean.

News At Ten top

News At Ten on ITV has taken over from the BBC as the favourite national news programme, according to the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board. It attracted an average audience of 6.6 million last year, compared with 6.3 million for its nearest rival, BBC's *Six O'Clock News*.

Train death

An off-duty rail worker died after he was hit by a train at Clapham High Street railway station in south London. The man, in his mid-twenties, was clipped by the train as he stood at the end of a platform during the evening rush hour. British Rail has begun an investigation.

Out in the wash

Comet, the electrical firm, has been fined £4,000 by magistrates in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, after admitting selling a second-hand washing machine to a woman who thought it was new. She realised it had been used before when it flooded and a sock and button were found in a pipe.

Stowaways found

Owners of the liner *Canberra* were yesterday deciding what to do with three stowaways found sleeping in a lifeboat. The men, believed to be Croatians, were discovered two days after the P&O liner left Southampton with 1,500 passengers and 800 crew for a three-month world cruise.

Blue Wales

A linguist has spent 18 months compiling a dictionary of 6,000 swear words in Welsh. The project became "a bit of an obsession", according to Ceri Jones, 29, of Minffordd, Gwynedd. The book, already praised by academics, will be published at the end of the month.

Raid ordeal

Two raiders woke a woman of 78 to demand her valuables after breaking into a house in Beaminster, Dorset. One man placed a hand over her mouth while the other searched the bedroom. After finding no valuables, the pair loaded the woman's dining table into a vehicle and drove off.

Long delivery

A 5ft tall woman has given birth to a 2lb baby, Elizabeth Raymond, from Swindon, whose son Joshua weighed 11lb 13oz, said: "I put on nearly three stone in weight during the pregnancy, and nearly half of that was Joshua." Mrs Raymond's husband Andrew is 6ft 2in tall.

'Super' trees linked to radio waves

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

RADIO transmitters can cause trees to grow thicker and faster, according to studies of forests in Michigan. Scientists claim that since the US Navy built a giant radio-based signalling system in the American state, certain trees have flourished.

The extremely low-frequency antenna, used for contacting submarines under the polar icecaps, stretches 90 kilometres through a sparsely populated but heavily wooded area in the state's upper peninsula. Since it was switched on in 1986, scientists say the transmitter has had curious, if subtle, effects on trees such as aspens and red pines.

Glenn Mroz, a researcher at the Michigan Technological University in Houghton, said: "It is similar to what

you would expect from aspens that have been fertilised." The scientists, who have taken records of trees in the area since 1985, have compared two identical sites - one near the transmitter and the other 30 miles away.

They found that red pines near the transmitter grew taller and aspens and red maples grew thicker than ones at the other site. Two species, northern red oak and paper birch, were unaffected.

The scientists, whose findings are reported in *New Scientist*, have carried out laboratory experiments to test the effects of the signalling system, which operates at 76 hertz. They suspect the growth spurts might be because of the electromagnetic field accelerating the movement of nutrients

across cell walls. The findings have intrigued the British Forestry Commission, which manages forests partly for timber production. A spokesman said yesterday: "Maybe if we want to get rapid growth we should think about putting some transmitters in the forests."

"Our scientists have several theories. It could be that the transmitter warms up the trees or makes water molecules more mobile. We have no plans at the moment to test transmitters in forests."

Until recently a similar transmitter had been proposed for the Royal Navy in Glen Garry, Scotland, but a Navy spokesman said yesterday that experiments on extremely low-frequency transmitters had been suspended and the project in Glen Garry shelved.

هكذا من الأصل

HOME NEWS 9

Stations offering through tickets may be cut by 80%

the licence obligation should be more limited, leaving it to the operator to use his own business initiative and sense to provide more services if he thinks fit.

"I have little doubt that if I were to impose such comprehensive obligations on all licensees, there would be increases in costs because the standard would have to be higher than that achieved by British Rail under the current system." Mr Swift said he was confident that new technology would enable rail operators to sell tickets through home-based computers, over the telephone and through other outlets.

Henry McLeish, the Shadow Transport Secretary, said: "This report is a hammer blow to the credibility of Dr Mawhinney. He has been humiliated by the rail regulator's decision to publish three options which amount to the same thing, a huge cut in



Mawhinney: can only suggest changes

Mr Swift was educated at Birkenhead School and at University College, Oxford. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore and Bologna.

He lives with his wife and son and daughter at Little Wittenham, Oxfordshire, from where he drives to catch his train from Didcot into London. Occasionally, he stays in London overnight to indulge his passion for the theatre.



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'We have listened to local people rather than to politicians with a vested interest'

Local government review gives final snub to Tories

BY IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

THE most wide-ranging review of local government in shire England for nearly a quarter of a century ended yesterday with the recommendation that only one all-purpose unitary authority be created among the last five counties to be surveyed.

The Government set up the review 2½ years ago in the hope it would lead to unitary authorities covering most of the country. In the event the independent Local Government Commission has proposed dismantling only seven of the 39 counties and leaving 14 of them unchanged. In the remaining 18, the commission thinks it best to grant independent status only to some larger towns, leaving the rest of the county unaltered. Rutland and Herefordshire are to be recreated as unitary authorities in their own right.

Yesterday's recommendations cover Derbyshire and Gloucestershire, where the commission had been asked to think again by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, about its initial proposals. In both cases the commission has

refused to change its mind, proposing unitary status for the City of Derby with the rest of Derbyshire left as it is and no change in Gloucestershire. It also recommends leaving local government unaltered in Cornwall, Hertfordshire and Shropshire.

Overall the commission has proposed 50 new unitary authorities, serving 8 million people, instead of the 95 all-purpose councils it suggested in its first draft proposals. If the ideas are backed by Parliament it will mean that 22 million people will continue to live in areas where the county and districts provide complementary services.

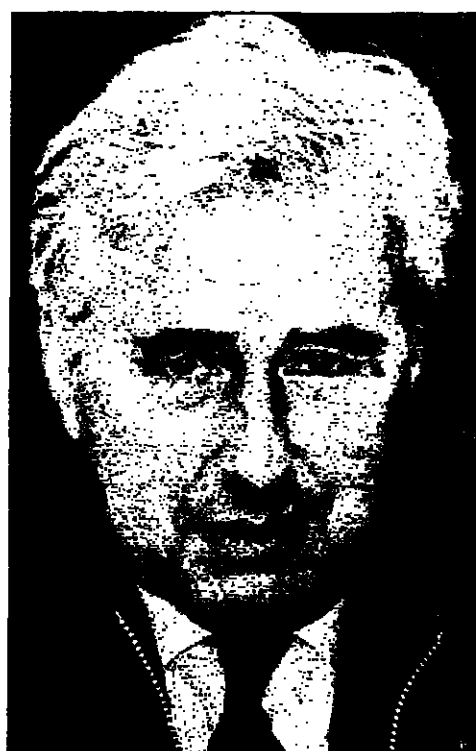
Sir John Banham, the commission's chairman, said the £15 million review was more of a tidying up than a revolution, and the important result was that a consultation procedure was now in place that could lead to change as and when it was wanted. The review had corrected the mistakes of the last review, in 1974, discovered ways of improving the existing system and had avoided spending £500 million intro-

ducing changes that did not have the support of the local people.

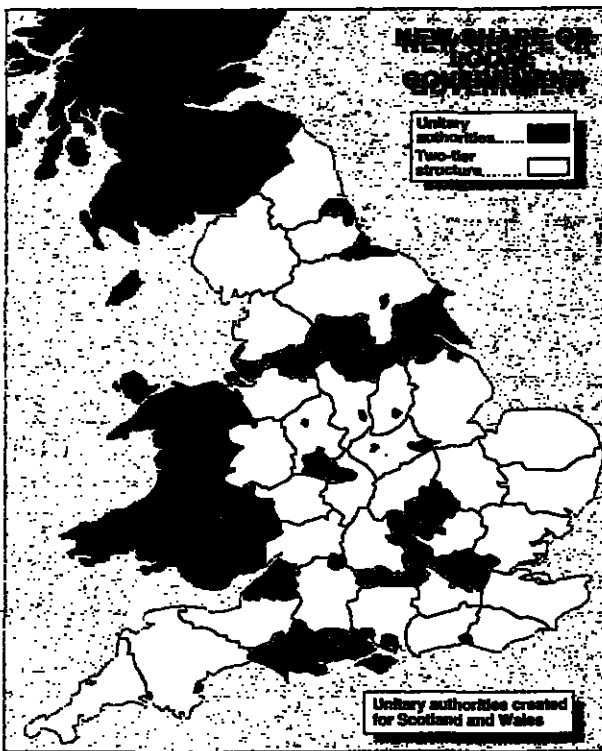
The structure left in place was flexible enough to cater for the effects of any future move to regional government, as favoured by Labour, and had avoided the "Balkanisation" of the shires that would have resulted from a network of unitary authorities.

In turning down the demands of ancient cities such as Norwich and Exeter to recover their independent status as unitary authorities, the commission had taken the views of the county as a whole into consideration. "Durham without Durham or Devon without Exeter are matters of considerable emotion to local people. It is not just a matter of preaching a sermon in the cathedral but of how local people see their county town," Sir John said.

"We have carried out a process of listening to local people rather than to politicians with vested interest, a process of looking to the future rather than the past," he said. "A process is now in place to



Sir John Banham, left, chairman of the Local Government Commission, who yesterday unveiled its final proposals, centre, and criticised the predictions made by his predecessor, Lord Redcliffe-Maud, right, which he said had been proved "precisely wrong" in every respect



enable further structural change to occur at the local level without a wait for a quarter of a century if local attitudes and circumstances alter.

"We were very conscious of the fact that our predecessors under [Lord] Redcliffe-Maud managed to get all their predictions about local government precisely wrong — all of them. We have put in place a consultation process rather than create a big bang which

is then going to put the whole subject to bed for a generation.

"In those areas where we judged there was insufficient evidence to justify change there is also potential for progress. We have acted as a catalyst for improvements to the existing system which would never have taken place without the prospect of abolition."

One reason the commission had agreed to leave things unaltered in so many places,

he said, was that counties had given pledges about how they would work with districts to improve services. The commission would now be looking for proof of this.

There was, Sir John said, no evidence that the unitary authorities which covered the entire London area worked any better than the two-tier system of county and district. "No-one can convince me that tranquility there is lower, education standards are higher or

community care is better," he said. "The evidence is not there and the case is not proven. If local people are having to pay for changing the system they need proof it is worth the money. In many parts of the country they want to see the existing system work better."

However, he said that if, in three or four years' time the public in areas left unaltered by the review did feel that unitary authorities were bet-

ter, they could press for change. The most important thing of all was to listen to public opinion.

"The commission is in a good position to prevent serious mistakes taking place," Sir John said. "Had the consultation process we followed been in place at the time it would have prevented one of the most serious mistakes ever made — the poll tax. We shall be paying for that mistake into the next century."

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Supercentres

Holiday resort bans beer in bottles

BY ANDREW PIERCE

A HOLIDAY resort has banned late-night bars from selling beer in bottles after a rise in the number of attacks involving broken glass.

The ruling by Torbay Borough Council in Devon will affect all nightclubs, hotels and holiday camps with bars open after the normal closing time of 11pm. Up to 30 other local authorities are expected to follow the initiative.

The council was concerned at the growing number of assaults using broken bottles, particularly among young drinkers who favour the strong "designer" lagers. One surgeon working at Torbay General Hospital has treated 70 cases in the past year.

The 47 premises affected will have to comply with the new ruling as a condition of their licence. It is the second stage of a clampdown on nightclubs, where the licensing authority allows only plastic or specially strengthened glasses. The borough's ten nightclubs cater for up to 5,500 young people each night at the height of the summer.

Barrie Davis, the head of licensing, said: "Excluding bottles seemed like the logical step after we changed the regulations governing glasses. Our stance has caused considerable interest from as far afield as Rotherham."

The Rank Organisation, which runs a nightclub in Torquay, appealed against the ruling but its objections were overruled by magistrates. An appeal to the Crown Court has been dropped.

Bottled beers date from the 1860s but sales have soared in the past ten years. More than 50 million bottles of the Mexican beer Sol, served with a slice of lime, are sold in Britain each year.

Anglers' cormorant cull leads to protests

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY

BIRD lovers protested yesterday at the granting of licences to anglers to shoot more cormorants and other fish-eating birds to protect salmon stocks.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Welsh Office have allowed a total of 28 cormorants and 32 goosanders, a species of duck, to be shot on stretches of the River Wye in Wales and Hereford and Worcester.

Anglers have long complained about increased plundering of fish stocks by cormorants, which in recent years have increasingly moved inland in search of easier prey. But English Nature, the Countryside Council for Wales and the RSPB advised against the grant of the licences, arguing there was no proof of damage to fish stocks.

Gwyn Williams, head of species and habitats policy at the RSPB, said: "Both these birds are protected species. The Government has failed to make a convincing case for allowing them to be shot." The number of salmon returning to the river each year had not fallen. "The average size and age of the fish has declined but this has nothing to do with avian predation," Mr Williams said. "It is probably because of increased netting of salmon out at sea."

Major David Shaw, a fishery manager on the Wye, said: "The licences are a recognition that these birds are doing considerable damage to fish stocks. It is not a case of trying to cull a species of fish-eating bird to extinction but to get control over a predator that is increasing by 5 to 10 per cent each year. Research on the River Tweed in Scotland has shown that a goosander, from egg to maturity, will consume up to 1,600 parr over an 18-month period."

The cormorant population is estimated at 19,000, rising by about 3 per cent a year.

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Major must minimise impact of a Blair victory on Clause 4

The Tory leadership is in danger of being outmanoeuvred by Tony Blair by taking the Labour row over Clause Four at face value. There are certainly deep divisions within Labour. The hard Left is going to fight fiercely and the vote for change is unlikely to be overwhelming. But it suits Mr Blair and his allies to build up the drama. He has to be seen to be in a real battle.

Tuesday's advertisement by left-wing Labour MEPs was an irritation and a distraction to Mr Blair when he was about to present his European policy in Brussels. He had to show that he was in charge. But his tough remarks yesterday about "infantile incompetence"

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

and "gesture politics" went much further than was necessary to regain the initiative after a period of drift. They were intended to raise the stakes, to dramatise the debate.

The remarks were similar in style to Neil Kinnock's dramatic confrontation with Liverpool Militants at the party conference in 1985 and to Harold Wilson's "dog licence" criticisms of left-wing rebel MPs in 1967. Such defiance of what are popularly seen as extremists generally enhances the standing of the party leader concerned. According to MORI polls,

Mr Kinnock's rating jumped sharply after his 1985 speech and remained more favourable for some time. It will not do Mr Blair much harm at Westminster to be seen to be attacking MEPs, few of whom are held in high regard by MPs.

Confrontational tactics only work if the party leader is going to win in the end, as Mr Kinnock did, though Lord Wilson's attack on the left annoyed many MPs and was largely ineffective. Mr Blair's current stance rests on the contradictory assertions that he is in a real fight and that he will undoubtedly win. His camp wants to be able to present victory at the special conference at the end of April as a triumph for his leadership. He has

taken a real risk. But there is a danger of exaggerating its significance.

Perversely, the Tory leadership is playing Mr Blair's game. Various statements from Conservative Central Office have gleefully pinpointed Labour divisions. Jeremy Hanley, the Tory chairman yesterday sought to have it both ways. He talked of Mr Blair's attempt to ditch Clause Four "unravelling before our very eyes". He then added that whether Mr Blair "succeeds or not is irrelevant". But if he does succeed, Mr Hanley's criticisms now will magnify his victory then.

The more sensible Tory stance would be to play down the Clause Four battle, to minimise the im-

act of Mr Blair's likely victory, and to concentrate instead on how far Labour spokesmen are willing, and able, to change party policy. That is the real area of Labour weakness: the failure so far to update thinking about education, health and other public services. The Labour Party is a long way from being Blairite in either head or heart.

The current focus on Labour gives the Tories the chance to regroup after the earlier upheavals. The temperature at Westminster is noticeably lower than a month ago.

John Major on Sunday and Tony Newton, in yesterday's Commons debate, have sounded conciliatory to the Tory Euro-rebels. But

not all are yet in the mood to respond. They split and went different ways in last night's votes on Commons committees. But their return to the fold is only a preliminary step. It is not enough for Mr Major to say what he is against. The leadership needs to move forward and set out its own proposals, especially on Europe, as Douglas Hurd will do in Paris today.

The current relief of Tory MPs should not lull them into complacency. They need to do a lot more than enjoy Labour's rows. These may only be temporary, while the Tory truce remains fragile.

PETER RIDDELL

Labour MEPs at war over advert

By JILL SHERMAN
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR MEPs who support Tony Blair's decision to replace Clause Four yesterday realigned over their colleagues' attempts to thwart the Labour leader.

Thirty-six MEPs have signed a letter to *The Guardian* giving their full support to Mr Blair's drive to modernise the party's constitution. This follows the action of 34 MEPs who severely embarrassed Mr Blair by putting their name to a newspaper advertisement defending Clause Four on Tuesday, the day that he was to address a high-profile meeting in Brussels.

Yesterday a row broke out among the MEPs after Mr Blair angrily attacked the dissidents. Many of the rebels remained unrepentant. Alex Falconer, the MEP for Mid Scotland and Fife, who placed the advertisement, accused Mr Blair of using Leninist language in his rebuke. Other MEPs, however, rallied to Mr Blair's side, including Glenys Kinnock, who said Labour should have nothing to do with "symbols, icons or mantras".

Seven of the MEPs whose name was linked with the advertisement in *The Guardian* decided to sign the new letter, which was expected to appear today. Some of them argued that they had not been told about the *Guardian* advertisement and that they had signed their name only to an advertisement appearing in *Tribune* in October. The seven MEPs are Hugh McMahon, Christine Oddy, David Thomas, Alan Donnelly, Joe Wilson, David Bowe and Stephen Hughes.

The new letter, signed by Christine Crawley, deputy leader of the European Parliamentary Labour party, welcomes the debate on the future of Clause Four. "This is a healthy and progressive discussion, in which no socialist should have anything to fear and from which the whole of Britain has a great deal to gain," it says.

"We welcome Tony Blair's initiative in inviting the Labour Party to debate how best to serve the interests of the British people into the next century."

Tory peacemakers win support of five rebel MPs

By ALICE THOMSON AND JONATHAN PRYNN

THE Government won the vote last night to retain its majority on standing committees in the Commons after holding out an olive branch to the nine backbench Euro-rebels and wooing some of them over.

Tony Newton, leader of the House, opened the debate on committee selection with an assurance to the whipless rebels that they would not be vetoed from their attempts to stand for selection to any standing committees.

Mr Newton, constantly interrupted by the rebels, told them: "Withdrawal of the Conservative whip does not constitute expulsion from the Conservative Party."

The Tories are technically in a minority after withdrawing the whip from the rebels, but Mr Newton said: "The party having a majority of MPs elected at the preceding election should retain a majority on standing committees unless and until it loses that majority."

The softening of the Government's attitude towards the rebels eventually won five of them over on the Government motion, which was carried by

a majority of 37. But four rebels abstained and several Tory MPs criticised the Government's stance, including the former Chancellor Norman Lamont, who said the Government had put itself in a minority and was now "denying the logic" of its position.

The argument over the composition of the committees, which examine the detail of government legislation, arose after the whip was withdrawn from eight MPs who refused to support a Bill increasing Britain's contributions to the European Union. The Prime Minister had made the measure an issue of confidence. A ninth backbencher resigned the whip in disgust at the Government's tactics, leaving Mr Major's administration in a technical minority of five.

Christopher Gill, one of the rebels and MP for Ludlow, complained that the Government had every reason to prolong his punishment indefinitely if the motion was passed and asked why it did not just restore the whip instead.

Mr Newton hinted to Mr Gill that the rebels could soon be readmitted into the fold

telling him: "It has been made very clear by the Prime Minister and others that all of us wish to see this situation resolved as speedily as possible."

Another rebel, Sir Teddy Taylor, MP for Southend East, asked for an assurance that Tory MPs, regardless of their "present relationship", with the party would be given equal treatment for committee places. Mr Newton told him: "I can certainly give you the assurance that there will be no veto."

Another rebel, Nicholas Budgen, amused the whole House by saying: "We are told that one of the ways we may be able to crawl back on our knees into the party is by a display of abject loyalty. Obviously we do want to display those characteristics but there is a practical difficulty. If we don't get the whip, we don't know when the votes will come. We don't know when anything will be contested and we cannot display the subservience required from us."

The Opposition continually harangued Mr Newton for "trying to have it both ways". Ann Taylor, Shadow Leader of the Commons, said: "In terms of this motion, the Government could withdraw the whip from half the Conservative Party and still claim to have a technical majority on the floor of the House."

She told the Government that it was setting a dangerous precedent. "If Members opposite cannot vote for the Government in a vote of confidence, which the Prime Minister himself has said could have led to a general election, then how on earth can the Government count them as part of their majority on a day-by-day basis?"



Ashdown pioneers MP's Charter

By ALICE THOMSON
POLITICAL REPORTER

PADDY ASHDOWN became the first MP yesterday to agree to be subjected to a new MP's Charter, allowing his constituents to scrutinise his voting record and analyse whether he gives value for money.

The charter aims to make MPs more accountable to their constituents between elections. MPs that sign the charter have to account for their time and tell their constituents what services they can reasonably expect.

The idea for the charter was suggested to the independent think-tank Demos last summer by Martin Summers, a former political researcher to the Tory Cabinet Minister Michael Portillo. Mr Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, wants each MP to sign a personalised charter.

but so far most MPs seem reluctant to take a step that could increase their workload and clash with party duties.

Mr Ashdown said yesterday: "Over recent years MPs have been very keen to hand out charters to everyone else. Why not charters for themselves? MPs are there to serve the public."

"Disillusionment with politics is greater than ever. The

MP's Charter will not suddenly re-establish confidence in politics but it is one way of helping to reconnect politicians with the people they are elected to serve."

A rough draft of Mr Ashdown's charter published yesterday outlines 17 requirements. A panel of three constituents will make sure that he complies with them. He must respond to constituents' questions within 14 days, hold a surgery at least once a month and report the source and value of any gifts. He must also discuss with his constituency panel his parliamentary activities, including his voting record. As Mr Ashdown had the third worst voting attendance record among MPs last year that could cause a few problems.

Nolan witnesses chosen

By JONATHAN PRYNN, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Nolan Committee into standards in public life is to question Lord Callaghan of Cardiff, although his successors as Prime Minister are unlikely to be called.

The inquiry was set up by John Major in October in response to "sleaze" allegations surrounding the Government and Parliament. Yesterday a committee

spokesman said it was unlikely that Mr Major would give evidence and no approach to Baroness Thatcher was being considered.

Lord Callaghan will appear before the committee next week. Other witnesses will include Tony Newton, the Leader of the Commons, and David Hunt, the Civil Service Minister.

Business warms to New Labour

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour Party last night hailed as an "outstanding success" the first stage in a campaign to draw it closer to Britain's business community.

After a one-day conference and dinner in Brussels, attended by Tony Blair and senior figures from many of Britain's biggest companies, Labour said it would continue its seminar programme aimed at underlining its commitment to the European Union.

Mr Blair was given a standing ovation after he made his most pro-European speech since becoming party leader. Several businessmen welcomed Labour's positive stance, particularly towards forming a single currency. Some, however, expressed concern that in government Mr Blair may face the same difficulties as John Major in persuading his party's Eurosceptical wing to back moves towards closer European integration. One businessman from a leading British retailer said: "We've heard very positive noises and there's no doubt that Labour have moved much closer to the aims of industry and commerce than ever before. But the road to government is paved with good intention and

Labour has still to convince us that Tony Blair can pull the whole party with him. However, he is making a very good start."

More than 100 businessmen paid £500 each to attend the conference and dinner, held at the luxurious Conrad Hotel. Alan Donnelly, MEP for Tyne and Wear, said the event was an "outstanding success" that would draw Labour and the business community closer together.

Graham Bishop, European finance adviser to the US investment bank Salomon Brothers, praised Mr Blair's action in setting up the conference. "It has been more successful than I expected. There's a wider spread of industry and commerce than I would have expected and it is clear that Labour's MEPs have an emotional understanding of the needs of industry which wasn't there in the past." However, Mr Bishop, who advises the Tory party on European issues, admitted that Labour was unlikely to attract his vote.

Labour hopes that a benefit of closer relations with industry will be an increase in the amount of corporate funding for the party.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY: In the Commons, questions to trade and industry ministers were followed by the introduction of a 10-minute rule Bill on diversity of media ownership. MPs then debated government motions on the composition of standing committees, the reorganisation of local government in Cleveland, and VAT.

In the Lords, debates were held on the Government's forestry re-

view and the Central European Time Bill.

TODAY: In the Commons, questions to Home Office ministers and the Prime Minister will be followed by a second reading debate on the Town and Country Planning (Costs of Inquiry) Bill.

In the Lords, peers will consider the committee stage of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill.

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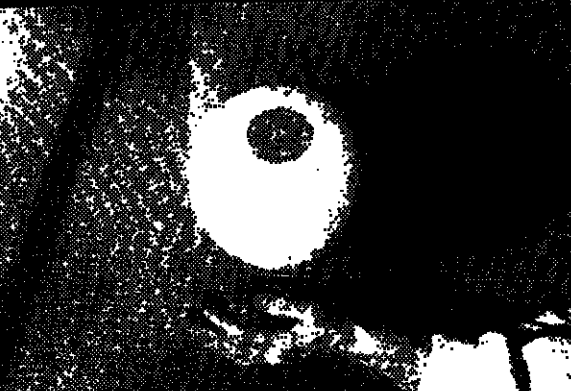
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Bomb plot suspects arrested as Pope starts Asian tour

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE Pope left Rome at the start of a gruelling, four-country Asian tour yesterday after a gesture of goodwill toward Buddhists irritated by what some saw as an offensive reference to their religion in his recent book.

Fears for the security of the 74-year-old pontiff rose after two people, one of whom was identified as Said Ahmed, 26, a Pakistani, were arrested in the Philippines suspected of plotting to assassinate him. The police said they raided Mr Ahmed's flat near the nunciature, the Holy See's embassy, in Manila and found four time bombs and a priest's cassock apparently intended as a disguise for the alleged plotters.

The police also arrested 21 women staging a protest outside the nuncio's residence yesterday. The women had wanted to present a letter to the Pope urging him to seek the release of 291 political prisoners detained in the Philippines. Dozens of the prisoners have been on a hunger-strike for nine days, demanding their freedom.

About two million people are expected to turn out to see

the Pope during his four days in the Philippines, the main outpost of Roman Catholicism in Asia. The Pope will cover 20,880 miles in 11 days, but Vatican officials say that considerable time for rest has been built into the schedule.

The journey to the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Australia and Sri Lanka will be his longest in three years and the most arduous since a ten-day tour of Brazil in 1991. The Pope has undergone two operations — for an intestinal tumour and a broken leg — in the past three years, and at the last minute cancelled a visit to America last October because of concern about his health.

Before his departure for Manila last night, the Pope assured Buddhists of his profound respect and sincere esteem for their religion. During his weekly general audience in the Vatican, he said that "during my journey I will be able to meet representatives of various religions", including Buddhists. "I willingly take this opportunity to assure adherents of the Buddhist religion of my profound respect and deep esteem. I trust

that the visit to Sri Lanka and other countries can reinforce dialogue and understanding between the religions, favouring an ever more intense collaboration for peace and solidarity between peoples."

The remarks evidently were intended to dispel misunderstanding over comments the Pope made in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, published last year, in which he appeared to equate Buddhism with atheism. About 70 per cent of the 17 million inhabitants of Sri Lanka are Buddhists.

Buddhist monks demanded that he apologise for a passage in the book in which he says it is appropriate "to caution those Christians who enthusiastically welcome certain ideas originating in the religious tradition of the Far East, for example techniques and methods of meditation and ascetic practice".

Vatican-watchers say that the Pope wants to strengthen Catholic minorities in Sri Lanka, Australia and Papua New Guinea by beatifying outstanding Christians in each of those countries. He also will tell countries such as China and Vietnam that the Holy See wants better relations with them to allow Catholics to practise their religion.

In Sri Lanka, a Buddhist temple whose senior monk has criticised the Pope was damaged in an apparent arson attack yesterday. Three statues, one of the Buddha, were set on fire in the shrine room of the 300-year-old Sri Pushparamaya temple in Raddoluwa, 15 miles north of the capital, Colombo. On Tuesday, suspected arsonists damaged a statue and crib in St Cecilia's, a Catholic church two miles from the temple.

Painted warriors, tribal drums and barefoot dancers will greet the Pope on Monday when he makes his second visit as pontiff to Papua New Guinea.



A German tourist in Davos, Switzerland, shovels snow from his car yesterday after more than 3ft fell in 24 hours. The snow caused road and rail chaos and the Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research said there was a high risk

Snow hits Swiss transport links

of avalanches above 3,960ft — well below the level of most ski slopes. In Davos, inhabitants were warned to stay in their basements and the

authorities were considering whether to evacuate people from the village. Rail and road links between Davos and Klosters, another resort, were

cut. Four avalanches took place yesterday morning in the Bern canton alone, but no casualties were reported. In France, the snow prevented about 1,500 lorries from going through the Frejus and Mont Blanc tunnels, which lead into Italy. (AP)

Italian test-tube baby sparks ethics row

FROM REUTER IN ROME

THE birth of a baby girl produced from an egg donated by a woman who died more than two years ago sparked an ethical battle in Italy yesterday over test-tube technology.

The case of baby Elisabetta grabbed front-page headlines, the story made more intriguing since the surrogate mother is the father's sister and thus the baby's aunt.

The story prompted calls for legislation to limit production of "designer babies", reviving the unease provoked

after several post-menopausal women gave birth. "We have reached the point of producing human beings as if they were boxes," said Cardinal Ersilio Tonini.

In 1992 Elisabetta and Luigi, a married couple unable to have children, sought help from a fertility clinic. An attempt to implant a fertilised egg in Elisabetta's womb failed and she was killed in a car crash in 1992. Four other fertilised eggs stayed frozen until her sister-in-law agreed to be the surrogate mother.

González 'lied' over anti-Eta murder squad, poll says

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

A SURVEY published yesterday by *El País*, Spain's leading newspaper, indicated that just over half of those questioned believed that Felipe González, the Prime Minister, was lying when he appeared on state television on Monday.

In that interview, he said his Government was not responsible in any way for organising a death squad that killed 27 suspected members of Eta, the Basque separatist organisation, in France between 1983 and 1987.

In an attempt to buy time and to prove his claim, Señor González ordered the Ministry of Justice and the Interior to sue José Amedo, the former Bilbao police commissioner,

for libel. His declaration to an investigating judge and to *El Mundo* newspaper seem to show that the Interior Ministry organised the Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group (Gal).

Maria Teresa Fernández de la Vega, the Deputy Justice Minister, said: "The Government is exercising its right to legitimate defence." The legal action is based on articles of the penal code concerning those who "injure or seriously threaten" state agencies.

The deputy minister also said that she was considering acting against Julio Anguita, the leader of the United Left communist party, and one of his deputies, Felipe Alcaraz. They have claimed that Señor

González is "Señor X", a term the investigating judge has used of the Gal commander.

"If she wants to do it, we will see each other in the Supreme Court," Señor Alcaraz said, pointing out that it would be the first time a Spanish Prime Minister had taken legal action against an MP.

Señor González seems to have painted himself into a corner by denying his Government's involvement in the formation of the death squad. Four former Interior Ministry officials are now in jail as a result of the continuing investigation by Baltasar Garçon, a leading judge.

Leading article, page 19

Youth back banned Paris radio station

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN PARIS

A PARIS radio station has found a novel way of making its mark among the 40 that compete for the city's ears: get banned.

Skyrock, one of three popular national stations for teenage audiences, became the first radio station to be officially silenced since 1945 when the state broadcasting authority ordered it to switch off its transmitters for 24 hours on Monday. Its offence was to broadcast a joke about the murder of a policeman — three times.

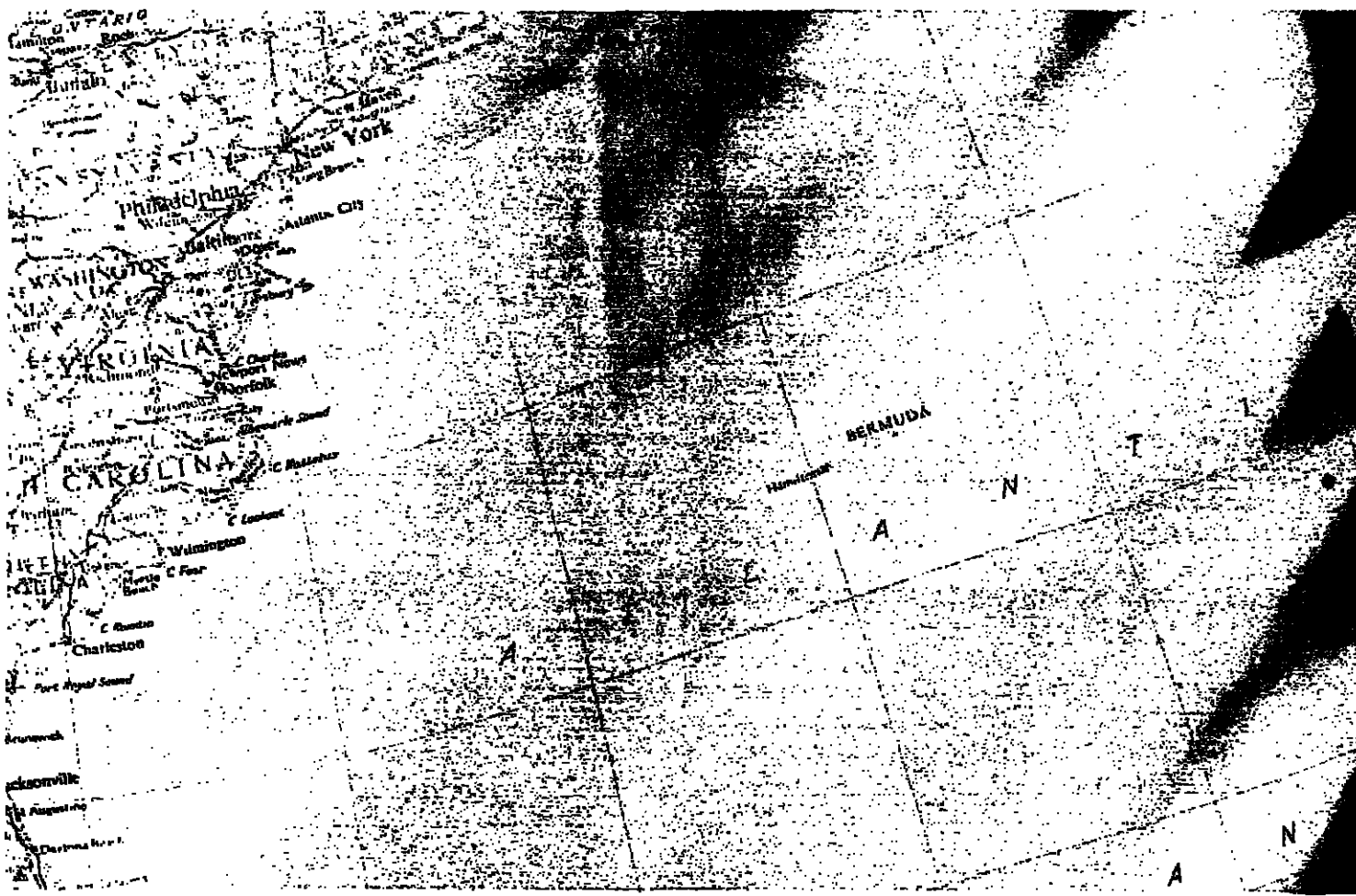
The station ignored the ban and is scoring lavish publicity, proclaiming itself a martyr to censorship. Instead of staying silent, it handed its transmitters to listeners to air their

thoughts in a day of "radio against violence and for freedom of expression".

Yesterday, with teenagers across France rallying to his cause and pundits meditating on media freedom, Pierre Bellanger, the Skyrock chief, welcomed an official decision on Tuesday to prosecute him. In return, the station would take the CSA, the state authority, to France's Supreme Court, he said.

M. Bellanger, 38, who says he is being victimised, has apologised and reprimanded the presenter who interrupted the news last week with an attempt at a jocular comment, repeated twice: "A cop has died in Nice: and that's rather good news."

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Yeltsin decree increases fears for democracy

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN yesterday moved to consolidate his shaky hold on power when he assumed direct control over the army general staff and threatened to extend his crack-down in Chechnia to the whole of Russia.

In a move that could have serious repercussions for the future of his country as a democracy, the Russian leader appeared to be attempting to extricate himself from the disastrous military campaign in the Caucasus by increasing his central authority.

The decisions were taken at a meeting in the Kremlin between President Yeltsin, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, and the Speakers of the two houses of parliament, Vladimir Shumeiko of the Federation Council, and Ivan Rybkin of the Duma, or lower house.

The meeting seemed to confirm two distinct trends in Kremlin politics. Firstly, that President Yeltsin is determined to hold on to power in spite of unprecedented criticism against him at home and abroad. Also, he appears to be distancing himself from key political advisers and military chiefs who encouraged him to launch the campaign against Chechnia but failed to deliver a convincing victory.

"We have taken a decision to start immediately dismantling illegal armed formations in the whole of Russia because guard units of commercial structures have grown immensely, not only in the

Chechen republic, but also in Moscow, St Petersburg and other regions," Mr Shumeiko said after the meeting.

The warning appeared to be aimed at the large and powerful private security firms, many of which have links with the mafia and state security services. Russians are fearful, however, that the move is simply a cover for the authorities to announce a state of emergency and to crack down on growing dissent against the Kremlin.

President Yeltsin made his move as Russia resumed its offensive against the Chechen capital, Grozny. Moscow forces launched new attacks on the Presidential Palace and aircraft screamed overhead, scattering residents. Reports said the palace was hit twice.

Sergei Kovalyov, Russia's



Piest: journalist killed in suicide attack

human rights commissioner. In a statement faxed from Nazran, in neighbouring Ingushetia, said: "Grozny ruins are full of corpses. These are the corpses of the Russian soldiers. They are being eaten by stray dogs."

It was reported yesterday that Jochen Piest, a German journalist for the magazine *Stern*, was killed by a Chechen suicide bomber on Tuesday, 40 miles from Grozny.

In Brussels, Nato called for the earliest possible end to violence in Chechnia and for a negotiated, peaceful solution to the conflict.

"While fully recognising the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, Nato allies are deeply concerned with the developments in Chechnia, especially the tragic loss of life and destruction," a spokesman said. Speaking after Nato ambassadors discussed the crisis, he said the allies appealed to all to proceed on the path of reconciliation.

Earlier in Moscow, the rising death toll, and fears that President Yeltsin is aiming to strengthen his power, led to a heated, but inconclusive emergency debate in the Duma. Efforts by several liberal deputies to push through new legislation that would prevent Mr Yeltsin from using the military to resolve internal disputes, met stiff opposition from powerful conservative and nationalist deputies. "I was one of those who brought Yeltsin to power," said Gleb Yakunin, a liberal MP. "Un-

fortunately, he is the one who has betrayed our democracy."

In the ensuing row, angry pro-democrat parliamentarians condemned the country's leaders as a group of "war criminals" for the mounting casualty rate among civilians and conscripted Russian soldiers. Ultra-nationalist MPs hit back that the democrats were "traitors" for jeopardising Russian sovereign territory.

"I refuse to call Yeltsin a President any more," said Kara Kryz Arakchaa, who held up photographs of civilian casualties.

However, Aleksandr Nevzorov, a former television journalist and now a nationalist deputy, said the soldiers were not being allowed to fulfil their mission. "Let the army act freely... there should be a media blackout on Chechnia," he said.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Nobel Prize-winning author and former dissident, added his weight to calls for the fighting to stop. He proposed dividing Chechnia into a Russian half, traditional Cossack territory north of the River Terek, and a Chechen half in the ancient tribal lands to the south. "Chechnia should be recognised within its historical borders," said the writer, warning that the conflict could engulf the Caucasus. "Let it be independent, if it wishes to," he added.

Letters, page 19
Politics of oil, page 29



A Chechen girl emerges from a shelled Grozny building in which six people died

Tudjman threat to expel UN troops

FROM TIM JUDAH IN BELGRADE

PRESIDENT Tudjman of Croatia has said that United Nations peacekeepers stationed in his country must go.

The 15,000-strong force based mainly in the Serb-held areas of the republic have been there since 1992. President Tudjman told foreign ambassadors that because the UN had failed to fulfil its mandate, it would not be renewed when it expired on January 31. The threat to expel the "blue helmets" came as diplomats from the five-nation Contact Group began a tour of former Yugoslavia aimed at reviving the Bosnian peace process.

Nikica Valentic, the Croatian Prime Minister, said during a visit to Belgrade that the decision had been taken because the UN had helped to maintain the status quo in Krajina, the Serb-held part of Croatia. He said that the UN "is providing aid to the Serbs, through giving oil and food to them."

The Croatian threat was met by an offer from Krajina to host the UN headquarters at its capital, Knin. At present, the UN headquarters for the whole of former Yugoslavia is in Zagreb, the Croatian capital. However, Branko Filipovic, a senior Krajina Foreign Ministry official, said that he doubted that the Croatian threat was real because "they do not have enough manpower to mount a full-scale attack and our army is more than able to fulfil its duties".

In private, UN officials said they were sceptical that the Croats would expel them. They noted that such threats were a traditional pressure tactic used against the UN before the mandate expired. In the meantime, diplomats from the Contact Group countries of Russia, the United States, Britain, France and Germany came to Belgrade to meet President Milosevic of Serbia. Today they are expected to go on to Sarajevo and then to the Bosnian Serb headquarters at Pale.

Officers told us lies then abandoned us, say bitter Russian soldiers

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN STARY ATAGI, CHECHENIA

JUNIOR Sergeant Alexander Tupolski is supposed to be a crack soldier from an elite unit of the Russian Army, the 22nd Paratroop Brigade. I met him yesterday as a wounded prisoner in the hospital of the Chechen village of Stary Atagi. He and the other 50 men in his unit surrendered on January 7.

Lying in bed with an arm wound, the 18-year-old sergeant said that his

unit had been landed by helicopter in the mountains south of Grozny on January 3, with orders to carry out ambushes on Chechen "bandit formations".

No food or tents were dropped with them. "For four days we had nothing to eat and nowhere to sleep. We marched around from place to place. We were forbidden to light fires to keep warm for fear of being seen. Our officers told us nothing and I couldn't tell my men anything." The young man spoke

bitterly of repeated radio messages to headquarters to ask for helicopters to pull them out. These were met with the reply that the weather was too bad. Finally, he said, his group came under fire from Chechen forces and surrendered after losing two men killed and two wounded. Russian helicopters then arrived and fired rockets at the place where his unit had just been.

Lying in a bed next to him was Private Valeri Kukayev, driver of an armoured personnel carrier with

the 65th Motorised Infantry, who told a similar tale of confusion and incompetence. His armoured unit was sent to Grozny with the first Russian ground assault on the city on New Year's Eve.

He said that his unit received no maps of Grozny and his only orders were to follow the armoured vehicle in front. "But it got lost and ended up following me, so none of us knew where we were going, including our company commander," he said. Private Kukayev's order to follow

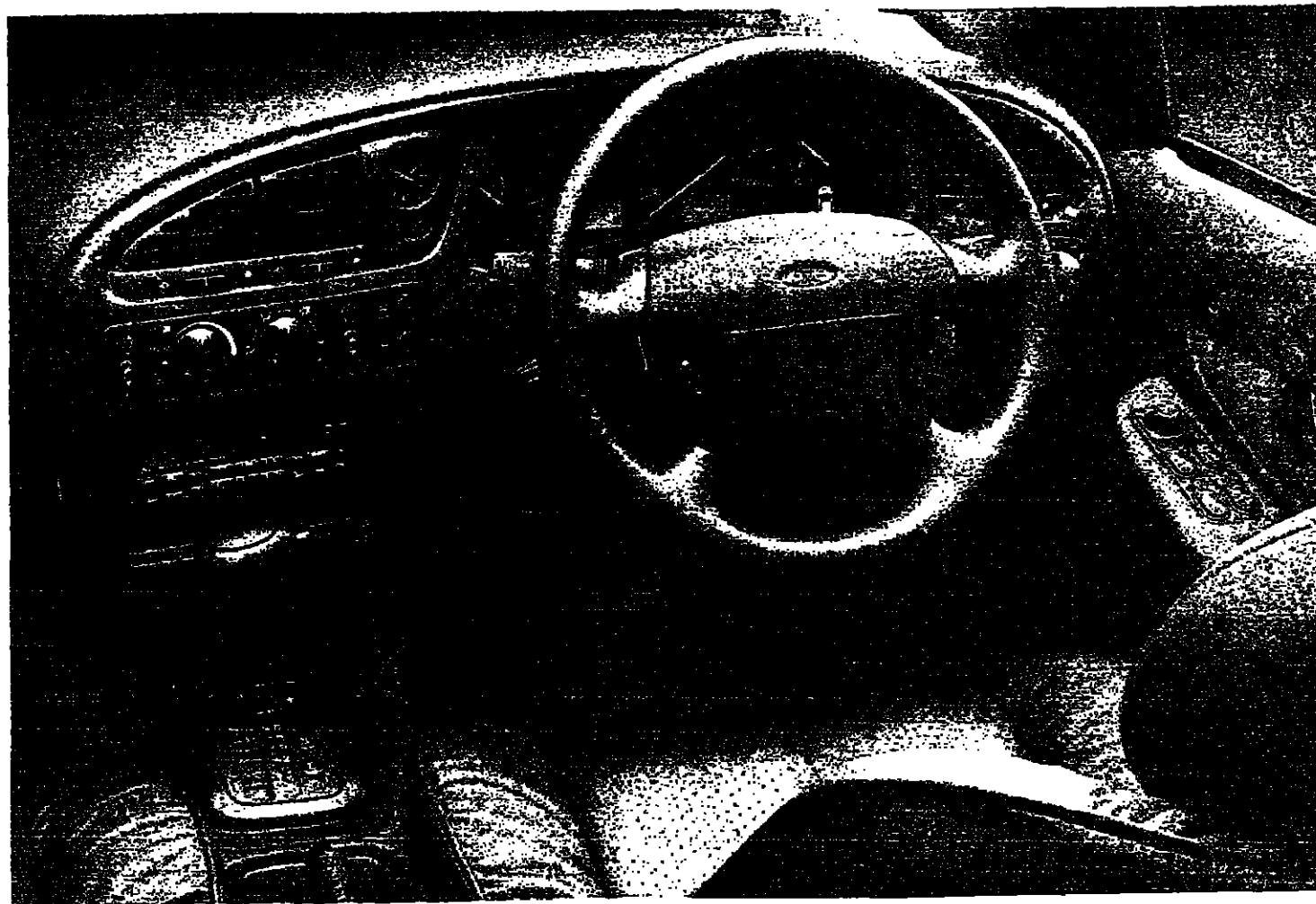
the vehicle in front was also given to other soldiers interviewed by reporters.

Private Kukayev said that his unit ended up in a confused battle near Grozny railway station, without infantry support and with Chechens firing on them from every side. He said that Lieutenant Chernychenko, his troop commander, gave the order to retreat and immediately fled himself. He and the crews of two other armoured personnel carriers abandoned their vehicles and

tried to run, but he was wounded in the foot and his comrades were forced to abandon him.

Both men expressed deep anger with the Russian Government and their own officers. In Sergeant Tupolski's words: "Our officers told us that we were going to help to free the Chechens from bandit groups and mercenaries, but they tricked us. We can see now that ordinary Chechens are against us and that the Russian air force is bombing peaceful civilians."

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California thrown into chaos by mud and floods

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

MUDSLIDES, traffic jams and flooding on an epic scale brought chaos to much of California yesterday as the San Francisco area emerged saturated from more than a week of rain. At the same time, the latest in a series of vengeful Pacific storms closed in on Los Angeles.

President Clinton declared 24 counties in the Golden State as federal disaster areas after a day of five flood-related deaths, \$41 million (£26 million) in damage and the mass evacuation of flooded homes.

He assured flood victims yesterday that the federal Government would be "with you for the long haul" in coping with their latest disaster. "You are a people who come together in times of crisis," he said in a message released for broadcast. "The American people are with you."

The President will visit California on Monday and Tuesday. The trip was originally planned to mark the anniversary of the Northridge earthquake, which killed 61 Californians last January.

More rain than parts of southern California expect in a year fell in less than a day, turning normally dry valley floors into rampaging rivers and temporarily sealing off the coastal resort of Malibu — victim of an apparently endless cycle of natural calamities — with walls of mud and rock.

Huey rescue helicopters from the Vietnam era shuttled up and down the coast between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, plucking bemused

and homeless people and a stranded dog from islands in the floodwaters. "January has not been our month," said an evacuee from Santa Paula, north of Los Angeles, who moved there after her San Fernando Valley home was destroyed in the Northridge earthquake a year ago.

Flowers and pot plants were distributed free to bystanders by a distraught nursery owner, whose shop at the entrance of one of Malibu's canyons had become famous for surviving previous floods and fires. Its rear wall was finally ripped away when the canyon's creek became a torrent on Tuesday night. The scene was floodlit by television crews.

Elsewhere on the Pacific Coast Highway, expensive sports cars drowned in mud. A



woman paced her rooftop, chanting: "Out, out. Stop the rain." She explained that she was not "freaking out", merely "calling to the elements". Her pleas were in vain.

After a brief respite and a spectacular evening rainbow, the rain returned, with yet another storm system developing off the coast. Forecasters said it would hit southern California yesterday in what one meteorologist called a "1,000-year precipitation".

Experts are blaming the unprecedented rains on a so-called "storm door" forced open by 190mph jet-stream winds that have driven off the high-pressure system that normally sits off the California coast, bringing its famous sunshine. The high pressure has been replaced by vast amounts of moisture generated thousands of miles away in the Western Pacific.

The storms, carrying unusually warm water, may be a symptom of a slight rise in the temperature of the ocean's tropical reaches, according to some researchers.

As southern California digs itself out of Tuesday's storm debris and braces itself for more, floodwaters are finally falling in the devastated Russian River area north of San Francisco. But more rain is forecast for the weekend.

In Malibu, a British resident surveyed the wreckage. "Yes, it's like this now," Gabriel Piotrowski, a businessman and volleyball player, said. "But next week we'll be back on the beach."



Vid Mario, 67, is lifted to safety by Eric Fetherston, a fireman, after his pickup truck was trapped while he was trying to cross the Placerita river in California

US hails Japanese concession on trade

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

A BIG trade concession by Tokyo paved the way for what officials hoped would be a harmonious White House meeting yesterday between President Clinton and Tomichi Murayama, the Japanese Prime Minister.

As Mr Murayama arrived in Washington on Tuesday night, Japan agreed to open parts of its heavily protected financial sector, allowing American investment firms to compete to manage about \$1,000 billion (£641 billion) in pension funds.

Frank Newman, the acting US Treasury Secretary, called this a "dramatic opening" and a "major accomplishment", although American money managers said that the Japanese could still stall implementation of the agreement.

Mr Clinton and Mr Murayama are both weak politically, and although the American deficit with Japan reached a record \$62 billion last year, the two leaders seemed anxious to avoid a repeat of the last summit in February 1994, which ended in open disagreement on trade demands from Washington.

Further dismantling of Japanese trade barriers remained high on Mr Clinton's agenda, but the watchword was co-operation, not confrontation.

Mr Murayama wanted to ensure that this year's 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War did not become an occasion for further recriminations against Japan. American veterans have forced the Smithsonian Institution to reconsider an exhibition that criticised the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the US Postal Service has abandoned a proposed stamp showing the Hiroshima mushroom cloud. On his arrival, Mr Murayama laid a wreath at the Arlington military cemetery.

The two men were also to discuss America's commitment to Japan's security in an unstable East Asia, and joint efforts to end North Korea's nuclear weapons programme.

Later yesterday, Mr Murayama was to become the first foreign leader to meet Newt Gingrich since he became House Speaker.

Police kill escaped murderer

New York: Police in Florida have killed one of the five murderers who tunneled out of a maximum security jail last week and recaptured another (James Bone writes).

Armando Junco was shot dead and Florencio Alvarez was arrested after a shoot-out with police in a Miami suburb on Tuesday night. Junco, 62, was a drug gang leader convicted of murdering two rivals, and Alvarez, 39, killed his room-mate after a dispute over a bag of marijuana.

Street clashes

Athens: Anarchists broke away from a Greek student march, threw petrol bombs and stones at riot police, and set up burning barricades. Three people were injured and five arrested. (Reuters)

Belorussia joins

Brussels: Belorussia has become the 24th country to join Partnership for Peace, Nato's military and political co-operation plan that stops short of full membership for former Warsaw Pact countries. (AP)

Envoy named

Alan Gouly is to replace Peter Streams as Britain's Ambassador to Sudan. Mr Streams was expelled a year ago over a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury to rebel-held territory.

Freed on bail

Cairo: An Egyptian, arrested for allegedly throwing his wife out of the window of their second-floor flat for not having his meal ready when he returned from work, was freed on £7.80 bail. (AFP)

Bus killing

Tunis: Suspected Muslim fundamentalist guerrillas shot dead 11 people and wounded six on a bus at Batna in Algeria's eastern radical stronghold, the official APS news agency said. (Reuters)

Trigger-happy

Khyber Pass: Pakistani tribesmen dancing in honour of William Perry, the visiting American Defence Secretary, alarmed his bodyguards by firing into the air in time to the music. (Reuters)

Sex offender law attacked after vigilante neighbours' assault

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A LAW in New Jersey requiring that people are told when a sex offender moves into their neighbourhood was heavily criticised yesterday after two men allegedly broke into the house of a paroled child molester and beat up the wrong man.

"Megan's Law" was enacted last autumn to allay public concern about the death of a seven-year-old girl

named Megan Kanka, who was raped and murdered by a man believed to be a twice-convicted sex offender. The legislation, which is being challenged in the courts, requires the authorities to notify the public of the presence of a released sex offender.

In accordance with the new rules, police warned local schools and distributed leaflets door-to-door in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, when Michael Groff was freed into the

community last month after serving four years of a ten-year sentence for sexually molesting his daughter and a young boy.

Last Sunday before dawn, two masked men allegedly broke into the house where Mr Groff was living and said they were looking for the "child molester". One of the men then attacked a sleeping guest whom he claimed he mistook for Mr Groff. The man's girlfriend stopped the attacker by hitting him with a frying

pan and called the police. Mr Groff, 25, slept through the commotion.

Police have charged two neighbours, Kenneth Kerkas, 52, and his son, Kenneth, 22, with burglary and assault. If convicted, they face up to ten years in jail.

The state Attorney-General's office, which is responsible for enforcing "Megan's Law", denounced the attack as unacceptable, and civil liberties groups said it proved the measure encouraged "vigilantism".

Courts in Alaska, Arizona, California, Illinois and New Hampshire have struck out community notification statutes as unconstitutional. They have, however, upheld provisions calling for the creation of registries that help police to track convicted sex offenders.

Mr Groff told a local newspaper after the attack that he himself would challenge "Megan's Law" in court. "I'm seeing my lawyer," he said. "I ain't messing around no more."

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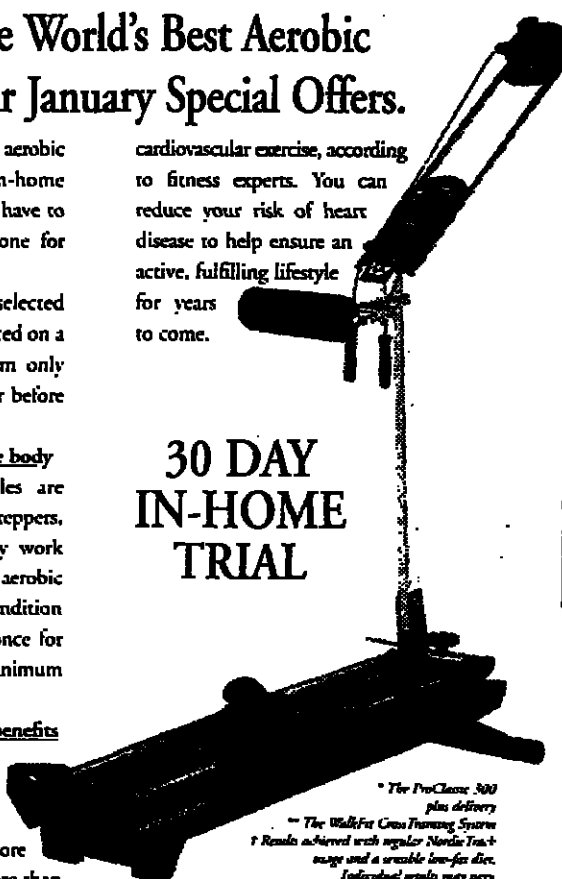
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Simpson book to help pay defence

BY GILES WHITTELL

LAWYERS for O.J. Simpson, the former football star, have indicated they will argue that wife beaters are not necessarily wife killers in an attempt to limit the amount of evidence about domestic violence at his murder trial.

Prosecutors are expected to try to introduce a host of potentially explosive evidence, including Mr Simpson's no-contest plea to a wife-beating charge and the dramatic call by Nicole Simpson for police help before her murder.

Mr Simpson, whose trial is to begin in earnest next week, is said to have been paid \$1 million (£642,000) for *I Want to Tell You*, a jailhouse memoir being published next month with a taped version he recorded in his cell. Proceeds are intended to help pay for his defence. The book was co-written by Lawrence Schiller, a former neighbour of Mr Simpson who assisted Norman Mailer with *The Executioner's Song*.

As a money-spinner, however, it may prove a disappointment. A state law revised last year to ensure fair trials for people like Mr Simpson by restricting publication of evidence related to proceedings court cases may require profits to go towards the costs of poorer fellow prisoners.

Arafat aide says Jewish expansion will halt talks

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI troops and Arab demonstrators clashed over building work at another settlement in the occupied West Bank yesterday. At the same time, a leading member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and close aide of Yassir Arafat, its chairman, called for the suspension of peace talks unless the continued expansion of Jewish enclaves stopped.

Yassir Abed Rabbo, the Minister of Information for the Palestinian National Authority, made his demand in an angry interview with Israeli radio.

The settlements are among many that Jewish residents are seeking to expand into thousands of acres of conquered land claimed by the Palestinians.

With the emotive settlement issue now re-emerging as the main threat to the ailing 16-month-old peace treaty, Mr Arafat has tried to persuade America to intervene to prevent all forms of settlement expansion. The US State Department has admitted for the first time that the settlements are a problem.

Yesterday's clash took place as about 200 Palestinians tried to march to a new building site at the settlement of Alei Zahav. Israeli troops fired percussion grenades and the protesters threw stones.

The violence erupted when Palestinians from the village

of Kufir al-Deek, southwest of the Arab city of Nablus, tried to break through an army roadblock set up to keep them from the area where settlers had begun to build an industrial park. The Labour Government has refused to halt expansion work on the 144 Jewish settlements already built on land occupied since 1967 as the PLO has repeatedly demanded.

The settlement battle has exposed a basic contradiction in the peace deal negotiated in Oslo, which envisaged Palestinian autonomy being gradually expanded through an area inhabited by at least 120,000 Jewish colonisers.

Mr Arafat to investigate the initial pre-Christmas dispute at Efrat, near Bethlehem, said that Tuesday's clash at

Elkana, where settlers started bulldozing contested land, was even more serious than the Efrat incident.

Announcing that a meeting of the Palestinian authority, chaired by Mr Arafat, would be convened soon to confront the settlement issue, Mr Abed Rabbo said: "This is the end of the road. Either these activities stop and settlers withdraw from confiscated land or the authority will have to take a serious and decisive decision."

Writing in the daily newspaper *Haaretz*, an Israeli journalist, Danny Rubenstein, noted that about 23,000 Jewish housing units were planned on occupied territory over the next few years, about half in annexed east Jerusalem. "The information shatters any remnant of the Palestinian illusion that the Oslo accord will bring about either an Israeli withdrawal from significant territories in the West Bank or that eastern Jerusalem can ever serve as a Palestinian capital," Mr Rubenstein said.

Nissam Smolianski, "operations officer" for the Council of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza, said that operations to stake a Jewish claim to contested land would take place over the coming weeks. "We are doing what the Government should be doing, preserving the land so they [the Palestinians] do not steal it," Mr Smolianski said.

Torture 'was covered up'

Jerusalem: The head of Shin Beth, Israel's security services, has been accused of covering up cases of torture by his agents. A report by the State Comptroller's office found the Shin Beth chief hid from Yitzhak Shamir, the former Prime Minister, the results of an inquiry into torture in 1990 and 1991. (AFP)

Outcry over Mensa call to kill 'defectives'

BY JAMES BONE

CALLS for the extermination of "defective" people and creation of a "master race" in an American Mensa newsletter drew furious criticism yesterday in the United States and from the British wing of the high-IQ society.

A monthly newsletter published by the Los Angeles chapter of Mensa, which accepts as members only people with IQ scores of 145 and above, provoked outrage by printing two articles proposing euthanasia and calling for re-examination of the "master race" notion. One article, written by Jon Evans, stated: "The vast majority (of homeless people) are too stupid, too lazy, too crazy,

or too anti-social to earn a living". It concluded that they "should be done away with, like abandoned kittens". He wrote: "A piece of meat in the shape of a man but without a mind is not a human being: whether the body is deathly ill, damaged by accident, mentally blank because of brain deficiency, or criminally insane. Those people who are so mentally defective that they cannot live in society should, as soon as they are identified as defective, be humanely dispatched."

The other article, by a lawyer named Jason Brent, argued that Hitler's extermination of the Jews had the unfortunate effect of preventing serious discussion of a "master race". He wrote: "Society must

face the concept that we kill off the old, weak, the stupid and the inefficient."

Although the newsletter carries a disclaimer making clear Mensa does not endorse the views of the writers — both members — the issue containing the articles raised a storm of controversy among the 2,000 Mensa members in Los Angeles.

Bruce Kent, publications officer and board member of American Mensa, said the organisation took a dim view of "hate material". Harold Gale, the executive director of Mensa in Britain, said: "One Adolf Hitler was enough for this century. If we would have got rid of disabled people, we would have lost Ludwig van Beethoven and Dr Stephen Hawking."

Singapore opens debate on dissent in a nanny state

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN SINGAPORE

THE authoritarian Singaporean Government is attempting to define the limits of political debate that it will tolerate in the island city-state, which has moved from squalor to become a world economic power in three decades.

Singapore has declared disdain for Western-style democracy and made clear its determination to retain firm control over most aspects of daily life. "There will always be some limits to openness and consultation," a government statement declared, although it promised wider limits for expression "as our society becomes better educated and more mature."

With little crime, no bureaucratic or political corruption, zero unemployment, no homelessness or poverty, Singapore might seem a model country. It plainly regards itself as a superior society in many respects to Western nations, which it sees as decadent and decaying.

Singapore is pristine: a sanitised, contrived serenity makes it the envy of other South-East Asian countries. For all this, hints of dissent surface through the controls over press and broadcasting media. Active opposition is dealt with sternly, although without the brutality typical of other countries in the region.

"Singapore's society is changing," Chan Heng Wing, Press Secretary to Goh Chok Tong, the Prime Minister, said yesterday. "Public discussion of issues and the way the country is governed have changed from a generation ago. As this young society matures, the boundaries of debate will expand, but this will be done gradually, bearing in mind the different pulls and strains of a multi-ethnic society."

A restrained debate has been going on in recent months over the limits of openness the Government should permit. It began with an uncommonly forthright letter published in Singapore's *Sunday Times* from Catherine Lim, an author, who criticised the Prime Minister for giving up his promise of a people-orientated style of government



Lee: treated Singapore's people like children

when he came to power four years ago. The Prime Minister's office responded fiercely. "A gentler, more open political style does not mean allowing crudity and obscenity to pass off as avant-garde theatre, or ignoring political criticism which masquerades as artistic expression," it declared.

The Prime Minister wrote to Ms Lim, telling her: "I have to set out the out-of-bounds markers clearly, so that everyone knows the limits of openness and consultation." Those

limits did not include demolishing respect for the Prime Minister and his Government by systematic contempt and denigration in the media.

The angry responses were a measure of the Government's sensitivity to criticism. Taxi drivers, when carrying foreigners, are inclined to mock the battery of rules that make this the ultimate nanny state. Chewing gum is banned, it is an offence not to flush a public toilet, and there are stiff penalties for discarding a cigarette end in the street. A gong goes off inside taxis when they exceed the speed limit, and lights automatically flash on speeding lorries.

But with 10 per cent economic growth last year and ever-increasing living standards, Singaporeans evidently approve of their Government's achievements even if many are weary of its hectoring, patronising and pervasive presence in their lives.

The shadow of Lee Kuan Yew, founder of modern Singapore, looms over the political scene. He is a Cabinet member with the title of Senior Minister, and continues to pull many strings. It is generally assumed that his son, Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong, 43, will in due course become Prime Minister if his health permits. He has had cancer, which is in remission.

As Prime Minister, Mr Lee treated his people rather like errant children. Much the same attitude is being adopted by his successor, whose promise of a kinder and gentler Singapore has given way to a pragmatic, priority defined simply as "good government which produces results."

UN social policy summit shunned

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
SOCIAL SERVICES
CORRESPONDENT

LEADING industrial nations are proving reluctant to back the first world summit for social development in contrast to the concern they showed for the global environment.

About 70 heads of state have promised to attend the United Nations summit, which is due to take place in Copenhagen in March. While Asia, Latin America and Africa are well-represented, the West is not. France is the only member of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations to agree to attend.

The summit is billed as the start of a "global drive for social progress". Nitin Desai, the UN under-secretary in charge, denied yesterday that industrial countries were snubbing the event and said they could still sign up. Speaking in London, he said the draft declaration of nine commitments to overcome poverty and promote employment was a significant advance on previous statements.



Deng Xiaoping in Peking last October in his first public appearance for eight months

Chinese release picture of Deng

FROM AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE
IN HONG KONG

A PHOTOGRAPH of Deng Xiaoping making his first public appearance in eight months was released yesterday by a semi-official Chinese news agency.

The picture shows him watching fireworks on China's National Day last October. Mr. Deng's previous appearance, when he was barely able to walk, was at the Chinese New Year last February. Many people are concerned at the effect of his possible failure to appear at this year's festival at the end of this month.

There have been several reports in recent weeks that the 90-year-old paramount leader is dead or dying. But official spokesmen have insisted he is in good health.

The picture was released by the Hong Kong branch of the China News Service, which said that it was taken at the Zhongnanhai residence, near the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square, used by Communist Party leaders.

Court urged to jail doctor

FROM MICHAEL HARTNACK IN HARARE



McGowan: practised in Harare for 20 years

RADICAL students brandished placards reading: "White man, your time has come" outside Harare's High Court yesterday as Mr Justice Paddington Garwe considered sentence on Dr Richard Gladwell McGowan, 57, a Scottish anaesthetist.

After 20 years practising in Zimbabwe, Dr McGowan was convicted on Tuesday of killing two black patients by negligence. They died after he gave them morphine injections at the base of the spine as an anaesthetic.

Mr Justice Garwe cleared Dr McGowan on three other counts, all originally framed as murder when politicians of the ruling Zanu(PF) party

claimed that he conducted Nazi-style experiments on hundreds of black women and children.

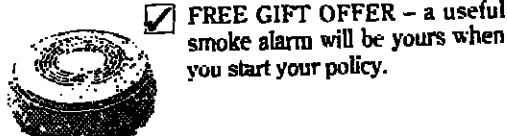
After hearing prosecution demands for a jail term, countered by defence reminders that a local doctor was recently fined less than £300 for killing a patient, Judge Garwe extended Dr McGowan's £20,000 bail and said he would pass sentence soon.

In his closing address, Patrick Chinamasa, the Attorney-General and Cabinet Minister who led the prosecution, demanded: "What demon has turned an otherwise skilful doctor... into a quack doctor or messenger of death stalking our hospitals?"

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EVERYTHING REDUCED EXCEPT THE QUALITY

Distinguishing between bladder tumours □ When repetitive action damages the bone □ Dangers of a narrowed oesophagus

NURSES from the Marie Curie Foundation are well-known for the work they do in caring for patients with cancer. They make a point of providing practical hands-on help when it is most needed.

More than 5,000 Marie Curie nurses serve the whole of the United Kingdom. They work long shifts and it is necessary a nurse will stay overnight, or throughout the day. Their service enables many seriously ill patients to be nursed at home. In 1993-94 a Marie Curie nurse was in attendance in a third of all cases in which patients had died in their own home. Last year they looked after 18,674 people, a 31 per cent increase over the last four years. Marie Curie nurses can be contacted through the local district nurse or GP.

The Marie Curie Foundation's interest in cancer is not confined to home nursing; it also runs a research institute at Oxford in Surrey. The institute undertakes basic scientific research into the mechanisms responsible for the development of cancer, the results

Two sides of Marie Curie

of which can then be used by doctors and other scientists engaged in clinical medicine.

Recently the attention of one research team, led by Dr Margaret Knowles, has turned to the genetic profile of bladder tumours. Cancer of the bladder is becoming more common. In men it is now the fourth most common cancer (British men are three times as likely to develop it as women). The cause of cancer of the bladder usually remains undiscovered, albeit that some cases are related to smoking, others to bilharzia, a tropical parasite, or to



MEDICAL BRIEFING
Dr Thomas Stuttard

bladder stones. There are racial differences in the incidence but no obvious familial tendency.

There are three main types of bladder cancer: the most common is transitional cell carcinoma, the squamous cell carcinoma is less common, and least often seen of all is the adenocarcinoma. Squamous cell cancers, sometimes the late result of bilharzia or bladder stones, are highly

malignant. The interest in Oxford centres on the transitional cell cancer which varies in malignancy from the 20 per cent or so which are poorly

differentiated and rapidly invasive to the 80 per cent which are well differentiated and usually relatively benign. The former need radical surgery and potentially toxic therapy. Of the 80 per cent which are well differentiated four out of five recover with local surgery but the remaining one in five, despite their relatively benign microscopic appearance, are also destined to become invasive.

At the moment doctors are unable to differentiate between the potentially rogue transitional cell tumour and the one which can be treated with cystoscopy, local excision, a reassuring pat on the back and a summons for a check in a year's time.

There's now optimism that Dr Margaret Knowles's research at Oxford on the genetic profiling of tumours will in time enable doctors to distinguish the potentially invasive transitional cell cancer from the one of low malignancy. In the meanwhile patients should report any bleeding into their urine at once and doctors should take every opportunity of testing urine not only for sugar and protein but also for blood which may be invisible to the naked eye.

Hip hooray



DARREN Gough was carried off the field on Tuesday with a stress fracture of one of the bones of his left foot, the foot which takes the impact when he hurls the ball down the wicket. Cricketers are not alone in suffering stress fractures; the feet of recruits pouncing the square during their initial training are subjected to such a battering that frequently one of the metatarsal bones snaps.

Frail-boned osteoporotic women, whether amateur ballet dancers or fashionably thin post-menopausal Knightsbridge ladies, also suffer spontaneous fractures in the metatarsals of the feet: in the latter instance sometimes after an unaccustomed hard day's walking at the winter sales.

For every cricketer or ballet dancer whose bones protest at excessive stress by fracturing, there are tens of thousands of athletes and heavy workers whose joints are eroded by repetitive

wear. Liza Minnelli, for instance, is one of the 250,000 people worldwide, 50,000 in Britain alone, who have had a replacement hip joint last year. The good news for these patients is that the Atomic Energy Authority's commercial division, working with a Cirencester-based firm Corin Medical, is developing a new carbon-fibre hip joint implant. The joint is as strong as the traditional metal implant and less stiff. There is hope that expertise gained in the aerospace industry may extend the usefulness of a replacement hip joint beyond its presently estimated life of 15 years.

Swallow tale



OVER the new year the press in Japan follows the death rate from oesophageal obstruction as closely as British papers monitor drunken driving. The Japanese are fond of riceballs, every bit as solid as Norfolk dumplings, but more sticky. In the excitement of the

occasion, diners who are too animated to chew their food properly — or perhaps have had one sake too many — may swallow the riceballs whole so that there is a danger that they may lodge in the oesophagus (gullet). The mortality this year was particularly high.

In Britain, as in Japan, too much alcohol can occasionally encourage people to gulp their food unchewed; but the usual reason why food starts to stick on the way down is that there is a narrowing of the lumen of the oesophagus. If from the start of symptoms both fluids and solid foods seem to pass through with difficulty, the trouble is likely to be with the muscles of the oesophagus. A narrowing of the oesophagus is commonly the result of malignant disease, but can also result from recurrent ulceration or following the formation of a ring of thick muscle, a "Schatzki's ring", in the lower oesophagus.

Whatever the suspected cause, anybody who notices that food is no longer slipping easily down from the mouth to the stomach, but that it seems to stick en route, needs urgent investigation.

Philip Howard relives the agony of a misplaced contact lens

I have worn contact lenses since I found that I was having to guess the Greek on the blackboard from the back of Lower School as if it were an oculist's alphabet. First I took the lenses out with difficulty and a pink sucker of the sort used for unblocking lavatories in Lilliput. But now I have become accustomed to semi-permeable lenses and pop them in as casually as humbugs into the mouth.

The transparent little discs are elusive. If dropped, they can bounce farther than you would imagine, or stick invisibly to unexpected places like the side of the nose or the tail of a beagle. Because I am careless about cleaning them, my contact lens expert has just given me a thin bottle to suspend the little things by plastic claws in cleaning fluid which not in the eyes.

On the morning of last Wednesday, rising with the shipping forecast to walk the Jack Russells, I found that the right lens had fallen out of its claws and was translucently just visible (I hoped) floating around in the (grubby) juice in its jar. Instead of keeping calm, I panicked. I erupted the jar into the basin (with plug prudently in) and could not find the lens in the pool of juice. Was that it, stuck by suction to the bottom of its pot?

Hot tears of a leader-writer

So I poked with a pair of scissors and out came the lens. Thank Mercury, God of the eagle-eyed, I inserted lens and went to work.

By midday my right eye was sore and swelling to a slit. I went to the first aid department, where the duty nurse was understandably squeamish about eyes. I could not extract the lens by my familiar method of popping it out by pressure between my eyelids. I had a leader to write and a long-standing date to read suitable texts at the Classical Classical recital organised by the Friends of the Classics at 7pm. The brightest and best of the classical world were turning out for this.

bours in our little corner of the word surgery, eventually held me down and floated the lens out with a mixture of warm milk and water. (I did not understand the point of the milk.) The lens came out with a long crack in it caused by the scissors, and broke into smithereens. I had been unable to extract it presumably because it had lost its surface tension.

Scribble, scribble, weep, weep. Mr Howard. Then off to the concert. Purcell, Monteverdi and Gluck sounded magical in Wren's beautiful church of St Anne's and St Agnes's. Rebecca Stockland sang like a Pre-Raphaelite angel, with Richard Black on the piano. Kenneth Dover, Jeremy Morse and Angela Lambert read their bits with passion and drama. But the congrega-



Howard's eye: corneal abrasion

tion was puzzled why the man reading Catullus XXXIV, *Dianae sumus in fide*, was weeping floods. For it is one of Catullus's cheerful poems, more "Boys and Girls come out to play" than a torch song for lost Lesbians.

After it was over, everyone went off to celebrate at an Italian restaurant. "Not you, Philip," said my dear but prudent friends firmly, and hustled me to Moorfields. There the eye doctor put in a drop of anaesthetic, which was almost as wonderful as the Purcell. She said I had scratched the cornea and she scraped my eyeball with a wooden spatula in case there were fragments of glass left there. After paying prescription charges, I was lucky to catch the Tube. No money left for taxis.

My Moorfields eyepatch is surgical white. Black or blue would have been more piratical, and I have worked out the stock answer to sympathetic questions: "Not even I can hide from indignant readers for ever."

And now, thank you, Madam, the agony is abated. Soon I shall be back to a lens in each eye, seeing the world as straightforwardly and without squint or tears as a tough-minded leader-writer should.

At last a way forward for men who are infertile

Aileen Ballantyne reports on a scientific development that should bring hope to thousands of couples

William Salter is two weeks old. His parents, Will and Paula, farmers from Devon, had been trying for a child for ten years, but Will was infertile and their cause seemed hopeless. One doctor recommended that they spare themselves further anguish and stop trying.

Then they read about the work of the Research and Treatment Unit in Reproduction (Nurture) at Nottingham University, and took the chance to try a new test-tube baby technique — intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) — that is designed to overcome male rather than female infertility. Using a needle twelve times finer than a human hair, just one sperm is injected directly into the ovum, which is ten times smaller than the full stop at the end of this sentence. Once fertilised, the ovum is planted in the womb.

Dr Simon Fishel, scientific director of Nurture, believes that all but the 5 per cent of infertile men who produce no sperm whatsoever can be helped by ICSI. He was working with Professor Robert Edwards and the late Professor Patrick Steptoe when the world's first test-tube baby was born 16 years ago, but believes that ICSI is more revolutionary than the test-tube baby technique itself.

"In vitro fertilisation was tried for many years in animals before the birth of the first human but this technique had never been tried in any system, human or animal, before. It is about as invasive as you can get, yet it works."

Dr Fishel estimates that ICSI, which was developed by scientists in Brussels, provides a one-in-four chance of success at each attempt. He has treated 200 couples since last spring, and has achieved 60 ongoing pregnancies of eight weeks or more.

The scientists at Nottingham have also developed a method for selecting the sperm, which may improve success rates. In cases of male infertility the problem often lies not with the quantity of sperm produced but their quality. The challenge for fertility treatment is how to pick the best. Until now, the selection process has been random: scientists simply looked at large quantities of sperm through a microscope and selected the one that appeared to have the most promising qualities.

Using a computer imaging system originally developed to monitor traffic flow, they can look at the sperm magnified on a computer screen and plot their movements. The sperm most likely to succeed is not, as previously thought, the one



Two-week-old William with his parents, who turned to a new test-tube baby technique as a last resort

that swims fastest, but the one that moves in a way designed to give it the extra thrashing movement needed to penetrate the egg's barrier.

"What you see is a movement that traces the five points of a star," said Dr Fishel. "Because the computer allows us to work in real time, we can take the sperm whose course we have been carefully plotting and use that very one to fertilise an egg in a laboratory dish."

However, since the sperm is injected into the ovum and therefore not required to penetrate the outer shell itself, computer selection may not in fact improve the chances of fertilisation. A clinical trial comparing success rates of ICSI with randomly chosen or computer-selected sperm should be complete by the end of the year, said Dr Fishel.

Like most test-tube baby techniques, ICSI is only available in the private sector, and it costs more than £2,000 for each attempt even at a non-profit making unit such as Nurture. It took the Salters two attempts and seven weeks away from their farm. To

maximise the chances of a successful conception Mrs Salter had to undergo a course of injections to stimulate her ovaries into producing more eggs than usual. The total cost was £5,000. "It was worth it all just to see the expression of happiness on my husband's face," said Mrs Salter.

Many couples in their situation turn to donor insemination, which costs hundreds rather than thousands of pounds and is available on the NHS. But unlike donor insemination, ICSI gives the infertile man the chance to father his own child and so is likely to be eagerly sought by those who can afford to pay.

Allan Templeton, professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at Aberdeen University, whose unit has also just achieved several pregnancies as a result of ICSI, is extremely excited at its prospects. "This technique is unquestionably the way forward," he said. "In 20 years this is the first time I have seen any effective treatment for male infertility."

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Janet Daley



The judge in Helen Green's case was right: adults cannot charge everything to their parents' account

At what point do you cease to be your parents' child? In at least one sense, never. Genetically you are always the product of the union between your natural father and mother. But since the advent of modern psychology (or, properly speaking, psychoanalysis), it has become acceptable to assume that even those parts of a person's identity that seem to be under his control — like his character and inclinations — are also established by parental influence. In the civil courts this week, Helen Green could be said to have tested the legal force of this proposition.

She argued that she had been so emotionally damaged as a child by her adoptive father's sexual abuse that she needed extensive psychiatric treatment. She wanted not only compensation for the abuse (which her father had admitted) but to force him to pay for its consequences. Since her psychological problems, which included eating disorders and the inability to complete professional training, were his fault, he — and not she — should be liable for the costs of putting them right.

Judge Anthony Bradbury decided that Miss Green should receive £17,000 in legal compensation for the crimes committed against her, but that she was not entitled to reimbursement by her father for the full cost of the future therapy she is likely to undergo.

This seems to me an exemplary verdict. Which is not to say that Miss Green might not be absolutely correct in her estimation of the impact that her father's acts had on her life. Sexual abuse by one's father (even when he is not a biological parent) which goes on regularly until a child is 13, as it did in this case, would be likely to have appalling effects on anyone's emotional development. What would have been impossible (and improper) for the courts to decide is whether the specific personality problems of the victim were an inevitable result of that sexual abuse, in the way that, for example, being permanently lame is the result of a knee-capping. Or, for that matter, whether Miss Green's choice of therapy was the best or the only way of coping with those problems — in the way that medical treatment for a knee-capping would be uncontroversial.

Just such a demonstrable cause and effect relationship between crime, injury and treatment would be necessary for the victim's assailant to be unequivocally liable for the price of her healing. And it is just that sort of inescapability which often seems to be assumed when people claim — either for themselves or others — a

kind of moral amnesty on the grounds of their childhood experiences. Freud is usually credited with the hardest line on psychological determinism. Influenced as he was by 19th-century physics, his writing is full of hydraulic metaphors which suggest, on a superficial reading anyway, that human personality operates on mechanical push-pull principles.

Much of our liberal conventional wisdom about social issues arises from a wilful misinterpretation of Freud. Among the more serious misunderstandings is the idea that he believed all repression of instinctive impulses to be unhealthy. In fact, he maintained that cultural life was made possible only by repression: that subjugating our primitive desires and redirecting them into symbolic and ritualised forms is what culture is. But the wrong-headed version of his thesis has hugely influenced child-rearing and educational theory.

His ideas about childhood trauma have been equally distorted. A commonplace among those who think of themselves as socially progressive is the notion that we are formed in irrevocable ways by the events of our earliest years.

Thus, whether through the inadequacies of families or wider social deprivations, people are assumed to be imprisoned by the limitations of their upbringing as surely as if they were physically disabled.

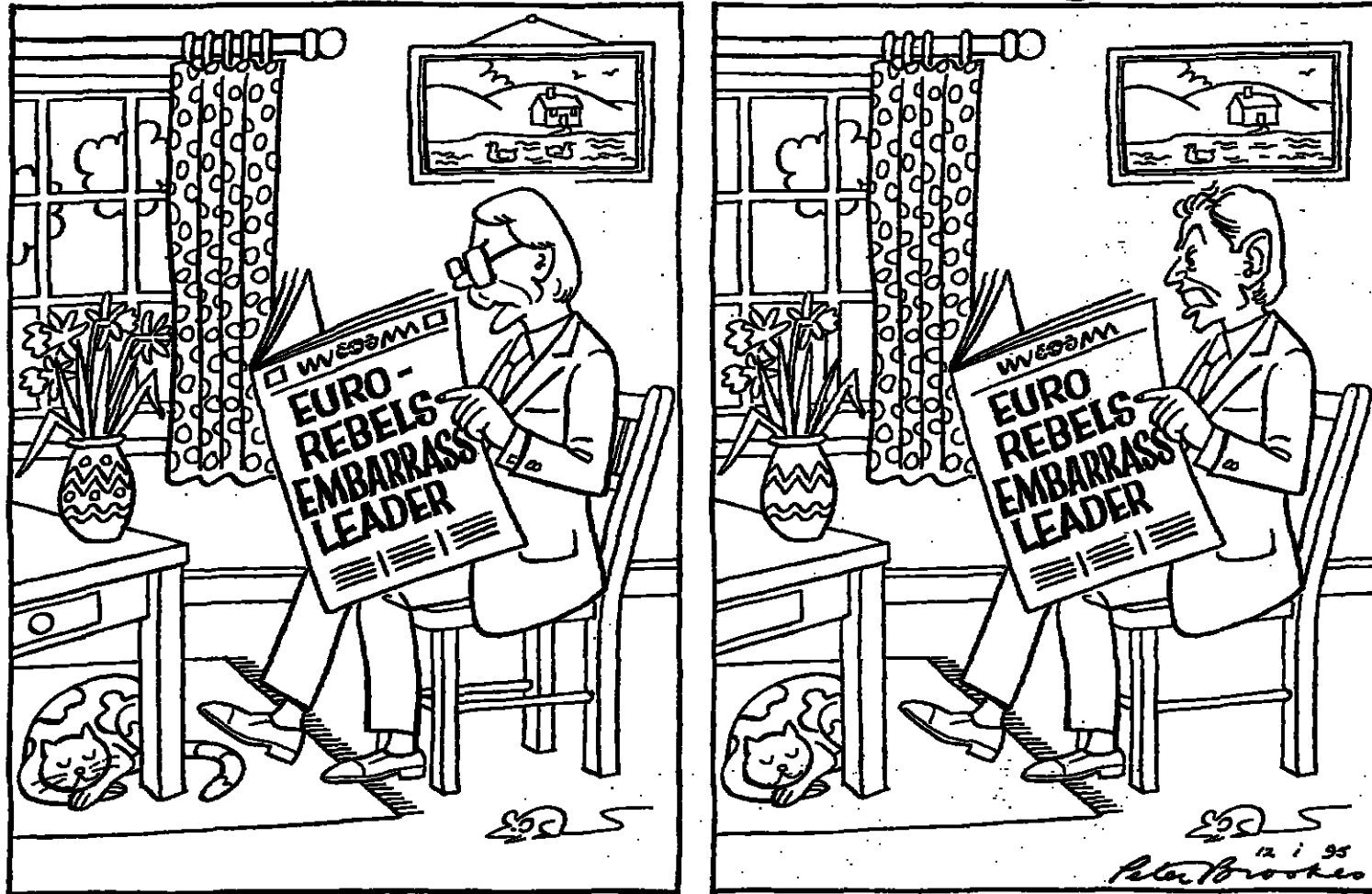
This is a neat inversion of the traditional idea of original sin. Instead of everyone being born guilty and having to spend a lifetime expiating that guilt, no one is guilty of anything since weakness of character is a direct product of earlier mistreatment. It is not your fault if you are criminal or malign, but that of your benighted parents. The difficulty is that if you are not responsible for your own behaviour, then for the same reason your parents were not responsible for theirs. They only treated you in the way that they did because of the inadequacies of their own childhoods.

And back it goes, in an infinite regress of moral back-passing to its logical conclusion: that no one is ever responsible for any action — bad or good — since all of us have been crippled by ever-earlier psychological conditions.

But must we dismantle the whole concept of free will in order to admit that people are affected by what happens to them in childhood? Any functioning society needs to assume that being an adult means taking responsibility for yourself, even if that includes finding your own way of coming to terms with what childhood did to you.

We cannot accept this infinite moral regress

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



No excuses for cruelty

Ministers really ought to be less cavalier about trying to deflect public indignation with the excuse that their hands are tied by "Europe". This has become the standard response to any contentious issue over which the Government cannot be bothered to take, or has its own reasons for wishing to avoid action. But the House of Commons does not like it, and nor does the public. It is particularly ill-advised to try to defend inaction when several ministers and practically every MP has either declared or implied a commitment to do otherwise.

The issue of animal welfare (not "animal rights" — a term in which the political whinge is implicit) is a perfectly respectable one, the scope of which has extended spectacularly over the past decade. It shows no sign of abating. Europeans may like to sneer at the "softness" of Anglo-Saxons, but the belief that man has a duty of care to all living creatures on this planet, consistent only with ensuring his own survival, has roots deep in pre-Christian faith.

In any case, there is an enormous mass of tertiary legislation — directives and their small print — churning around affecting practically every aspect of our daily life, but much of it is contradictory or so heavily codiciled that any ingenious lawyer (or civil servant) could find a way through after 30 minutes' close study. Many member states of the European Union do not even bother to justify their non-compliance with Euro law — try claiming welfare in Italy, or looking for the fire escape in a Spanish hotel — yet in this country, benefits entitlement, together with each succeeding and more rigorous amendment of the health and safety regulations, are piled systematically on the taxpayer and the small business.

Unlike the civil service in more easygoing lands, Whitehall displays an enthusiasm for enforcement that is matched only by its zeal for "add-ons". These are the tedious extras the reverse of "opt-outs" which domestic legislatures are permitted to ignore in passing Euro laws. (The Ministry of Agriculture's score, incidentally, is presently in the high seventies.)

Even so, I have some sympathy with William Waldegrave's week-end ruined, convergent pressure from two directions (does anyone actually know that one of his calves ended up in a veal crate?), safe

Alan Clark says the Tories should use the outcry over animal welfare to win a political and compassionate victory

Tory area up in arms — and so on.

The urgent meeting that was convened is instantly recognisable from Yes, Minister. "I suggest that you praise the demonstrators," Minister. Say that you sympathise with their concern, but that they should be making their point in Brussels."

"Mmm. Might work. Anyway, we've agreed. That's the line to take." But a moment's reflection would have shown that taking this advice would simply irritate people. If the British Government, arguing its case in the Council of Ministers, cannot produce a change, what chance would there be for a group of housewives and students with placards?

In any case, most people do not much care for these protestations of impotence in the face of Europe — particularly when they are demonstrably bogus.

If the Spaniards can threaten to block the enlargement of the Community unless they are granted access to British fishing waters, and if John Major could very splendidly (and, I suspect, with far from unanimous approval in Whitehall) use the veto to block an ill-disposed candidate for the presidency of the Commission, then why cannot our own Ministry of Agriculture be a bit more assertive?

The explanation is that it does not bother much about the public. Its primary obligation is to the industry which it "sponsors". Factory farming and pumping cyanide gas into badger setts are just part of the ethic. And every incoming minister must rectify whatever else you want to do. Don't fall foul of the NFU.

So it is hardly surprising, to cite a highly revealing example, that the British representative should have been the only member of the agriculture council in Brussels last month to cast his vote in favour of bovine

setramorphin, a suspect chemical, banned in the United States, which induces an even higher "yield" of milk after the weakened calf has been taken away from its mother.

Emotive appeals — inseparable from questions of animal welfare — are good for arousing commitment but bad for argument. As soon as the temperature rises, the familiar pejorative, coded or otherwise, start flying. Pink commentators stigmatised the protesters as "middle-aged and middle-class" — and short of including the adjective "white" as derogatory, you can't get lower than that.

Meanwhile, conservatives, to whom "middle-aged and middle-class" signifies persons of a responsible and generous disposition, start complaining about "activists", "students" and "weirdos".

Quite predictably, though with no very strong logic, someone asked over the weekend: "What about the babies in Rwanda?" And then there is the facile but ever-present charge of "preferring animals to humans".

Without doubt there are profound philosophical dilemmas here, running to the earliest roots of the classical and Egyptian civilisations, and they should not be trivialised. Legend teaches that the Titanic and the Dionysian elements are together in human nature, and that to murder animals is to throw into doubt the whole relationship between men, gods and beasts.

This was the basis of the Orphic religion, which merged into the philosophy of Pythagoras, in which mysticism and vegetarianism were entirely compatible with those disciplines required by the new mathematics. In Ancient Rome, the figure of Orpheus was both aesthetic and intellectual, "having the power to sweeten all minds and temperaments — men,

gods and animals — with his music. This sound symbolised the music of the seven planets and the laws of the universe, this knowledge bequeathing a magical power (which must never be abused) over all living things".

Christianity, with its convenient assurance that man has "dominion" granted by God over all other forms of life, is not yet 2,000 years old.

For millennia, man's relationship with animals was governed by respect. Animals ran faster, cared for their young, had greater stamina, were naturally — as innumerable cave paintings testify — more elegant and handsome.

And for most people, even today, what is repugnant is the spectacle of cruelty inflicted on other living creatures systematically and without respect, in the furtherance of financial gain. And on this scale it is a cause to which considerable political capital now attaches.

If the Government is fast on its feet, it can still draw advantage from the whole affair. The dispute is a classic example of a clash between profit and idealism, between popular outcry and vested interest. There are several ways in which the Government can be seen to be "listening" (deliberate and obsequious being one of the principal complaints that presently confront Conservatives on the doorstep), without necessarily "taking sides". These might include compelling the hauliers to pay for the colossal level of police protection they enjoy (last accorded, it should be recalled, to the Nottinghamshire miners — and look what happened to them), or asking the Lord Chancellor's office to remind the Courts that there is ample provision on the statute book for convictions on cruelty charges to be backed up by bans on the future ownership or handling of the type of animal involved.

My own concern is that this opportunity will be allowed to slip away, and that a long and fractious period of dispute will follow, with the fault lines becoming increasingly obscured by party political commitment. In the end, in all probability, the protesters will win, but the Government will get no credit.

It would not, alas, be the first time during this unhappy parliament that assurances repeated in the manifesto, in election address, in the House of Commons and in ministerial speeches have not been backed by action when the time of trial arrives.

The case for quangos

Michael Dynes and David

Walker on how we are governed

The constitutional radical David Marquand this week inaugurated a series of lectures sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Royal Society of Arts, which should add spice to the debate about how we govern ourselves into which we have absentmindedly stumbled.

Over the past ten years, there has been a revolution in public service management, in Whitehall, administrative bodies and local authorities. The performance of the Prison Service and appointments to health service trusts are issues in their own right, yet they also raise deeper questions about the effectiveness of Parliament and parliamentarians, the role and responsibilities of ministers, the increasing hue and cry over the proliferation of quangos, and whether our system of government is out of control.

The debate has been inadvertently brought about by the Government's own public service reforms. "Next Steps" executive agencies — the programme of freeing ministers from the day-to-day administrative burden — was introduced as a way of saving money and of reducing politicians' vulnerability to problems of accountability such as those haunting Michael Howard. Education, health and housing reforms have raised similar questions of local accountability.

The Government has found itself on the defensive. Take the "quango state". Most critics fail to make the distinction between bodies which do the administration themselves, such as the Audit Commission, the Medical Research Council and the Forestry Commission, and bodies which merely advise, such as the Parole Board, the Consumers Panel, and the Political Honours Scrutiny Committee. Bodies such as the Apple and Pear Research Council and the Foreign Office's Government Hospitality Fund Advisory Committee for the Purchase of Wine are ridiculed — not least because of their names. But most do valuable work.

There are questions to be asked about how the chain of command operates, who should be held responsible when things go wrong, who should be appointed to run these bodies, and how they spend taxpayers' money. But to suggest that agencies, quangos, and other non-elected public bodies are a cancer on the body politic is bordering on the hysterical. Britain could not be governed without them.

Last month, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture announced new appointments to the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. Were these more jobs for the boys and girls? On the contrary: it performs a useful service monitoring new data on the composition and effects of substances used in agriculture. Its members are scientists, doctors and agronomists, not Tory placemen.

It is said that local authorities would do a better job than the new generation of quangos in health, education and housing, but this flies in the face of experience. Two damning reports by the Audit Commission this week suggest that many local government authorities are wasting up to £1 billion a year of taxpayers' money.

Little wonder that under both Tory and Labour governments since the 1930s, function after function has been moved out of the sphere of town and county halls. It is true that local authorities have to some extent redeemed themselves in recent years, but no one is suggesting that councils should, for instance, re-colonise housing association projects. On the contrary, more far-seeing councils (often Labour-run) want to off-load their housing portfolios onto investment trusts — quangos by another name.

A devolved and in some measure appointed state is a fact of modern life. The notion cultivated by critics like Gerald Kaufman that direct democracy can somehow run elaborate operations like the delivery of pensions and income support is a nonsense. Agencies and quangos there must be. But we do need to know more about them, and our *Times Guide to the New British State* is an overdue start.

Even the much-banded notion of ministerial accountability needs more sophisticated handling. A distinction made between macro and micro responsibility is needed: identifying the author of an error and ensuring that the public will be implemented are different.

Mr Kaufman takes exception when his questions are answered by officials rather than ministers. The key point is that officials nowadays have identities. Their addresses and telephone numbers are available. They should respond, quickly, to Mr Kaufman or any other complainant. To define accountability exclusively in terms of ministers is to make a profound mistake about the capacity of the State to oversee everything. Accountability must always end with ministers. But it necessarily begins with the front-line staff. Name, rank and job description, if you please.

"The Times Guide to the New British State: The Government Machine in the 1990s" by Michael Dynes and David Walker is published by Times Books at £16.99.

Prince to wed

LONDON'S cocktail circuit is abuzz with talk of the biggest royal wedding since the Prince of Wales led Lady Diana Spencer up the aisle in 1981. And this has nothing to do with the prince's marital plans following the Parker Bowles's divorce announcement.

This morning the former king of Greece King Constantine will announce that his son Crown Prince

Pavlos is to marry in London on July 1. Almost every royal family in Europe will be represented at the ceremony.

The Queen and Prince Philip are likely to attend the service at the Greek Cathedral of St Sophia. King Constantine and Queen Anne-Marie are close friends of Buckingham Palace.

The 27-year-old Crown Prince



Crown Prince Pavlos and his fiancée, Marie-Chantal Miller

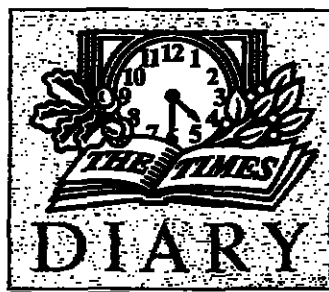
proposed to Marie-Chantal Miller, 26, after a two-year courtship. He studies at Georgetown University in Washington (and shares a room with King Juan Carlos of Spain's son Prince Felipe). She studies art history at New York University. Friends describe Marie-Chantal as a live-wire who sails and skis. She is taking instructions to join the Greek Orthodox church.

"This is a good match. Her father is one of the richest men in America. And he is a naturalised British citizen," says my man in the olive groves.

● The beleaguered Home Secretary Michael Howard is under attack even on the most domestic front. In next month's Harpers & Queen his wife Sandra suggests he is slow to fill dinner guests' wine-glasses. "I'm always jumping up from the table... who else keeps an eye on the glasses if you're married to someone who's a bit absent-minded about that?"

Olivier branch

THE LATE Lord Olivier's beguiling daughter Tamsin has abandoned her theatrical career for the time being. She has opened a politically correct restaurant in north-west London, specialising in free-range organic meat and vegetarian



British food. Curiously, it is called The Engineer.

"We dreamt up this scheme when we were both unemployed," explains her partner, Abigail Osborne. "It used to be a Brunel pub called The Engineer and it is very bad luck to change pub names." Tamsin will not be turning her back on the stage altogether. "We will be using some of the floor space for performances like readings and recitals," says Osborne.

Ample reward

THE DINNER at the British embassy in Washington on Tuesday night to mark the presentation of an honorary knighthood to the former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger was a jolly affair. General Colin Powell and Washington Post owner Katharine Gra-

ham were among the guests. The major topic of conversation was Eagleburger's ample frame. A letter from former President George Bush was read out by the British Ambassador, Sir Robin Renwick. "I wish him well as a fellow knight," he wrote. "But in respect of the horse he rides on he needs to go on the Slim Fast route." Eagleburger was relieved he didn't have to kneel for the presentation: "They would've had to have a derrick to get me up again."

● Spotted at the Royal Opera House on Tuesday night for Verdi's *Otello* was the lachrymose former Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke. He was sitting with Lord Weinstock, Sir David and Lady Carina Frost, and his new companion Blanche d'Alpuget. Hawke was no doubt painfully alive to the tale of love and jealousy being acted out before him. Indeed he seemed to be on the verge of tears throughout.

Take it away

MEMBERS of the great unwashed could be shuffling towards the Serpentine Gallery this spring, when its north gallery will offer tramps rich pickings. Mountains of second-hand clothes will be piled on the floor in the name of art for an

SORRY, WE'RE CLEAN OUT OF JUSTICE



exhibition *Take me (I'm yours)*. Gallery-goers will be asked to buy designer carrier bags and help themselves to any clothes they want.

"This interactive exhibit questions the idea of value and explores the history of its garments," explains a spokesman for the French artist Christian Boltanski, who arranges the clothes. The Serpentine elaborates: "We have had to find the three tons of clothes ourselves and we will have to keep topping up the supply as people take them away."

P.H.S



NEW LABOUR, OLD EUROPE

Blair has barely begun his continental journey

It is not difficult to see why Tony Blair put on classic "pro-European" garb for his speech in Brussels this week. He sees himself as a modern social democrat who, like many of his generation, has travelled widely and enjoys the company of other Europeans. He meets fellow politicians on the Continent and can happily swap analyses of the "social dimension" to free trade and the dangers of resurgent nationalism. Since, however, Mr Blair is a thoughtful man and has given himself good time to think on this subject, it remains surprising that he identifies being pro-European so closely with favouring further European integration.

In Brussels on Tuesday, the Labour leader planted his banner with unnecessary firmness on the federalist shore. "European integration," he said, "cannot happen by stealth. It must be with the people's consent. And that is why pro-Europeans must be persuaders in the debate about Europe's future." There is that link again: pro-Europeans, it seems, have a duty to persuade the people that integration is desirable.

It is true, of course, that instinctive anti-Europeans are against federalism. Many would prefer Britain not even to be a member of the EU and will have voted "no" to continued membership in the referendum of 1975. But there are also many who voted "yes", and who would still term themselves "pro-Europeans", do not share the vision of Europe that is held by Helmut Kohl, Jacques Delors or Francois Mitterrand. That is the growing group to which Mr Blair should address his mind.

One mistake that he and others around him make is to assume that supporting further integration is the modern thing to do. In reality, they are backing the view of three old men whose views were forged by the Second World War, one of whom is retired, a second is about to bow out, and the third is near the end of his career. The new wave of politicians, even on the Continent, is markedly more sceptical. Many doubt that a

single currency would bring economic benefits even to its members. And if it did, they question whether those benefits would outweigh the loss of freedom to control monetary policy and the nationalist stirrings that would almost certainly ensue.

Perhaps that loss of freedom is precisely what Mr Blair wants. Maybe he hopes that it would allay voters' suspicions that Labour is incapable of running the economy without stoking up inflation. There must surely be less drastic ways of regaining voters' trust. The easiest is by example: for Labour to govern responsibly for a few years. But if inflation really is to Labour as a bottle of whisky is to an alcoholic, then Mr Blair could, in a spirit of self-abnegation, simply cede more powers over the setting of interest rates to the Bank of England.

Among Mr Blair's closest advisers are some, such as Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson, who might be termed "unthinking" pro-Europeans. But the new Labour leader is used to displaying greater independence. Unlike his predecessor, he has not staked his career on the issue of Europe. He should be able to question some of the assertions that are always wheeled out by integrationists: whether Britain would actually be worse off outside a single currency, whether it gains influence in the EU only by agreeing with its neighbours, whether flexibility rather than ossification should not be the guiding design for the continent in the 21st century.

Mr Blair now has the chance to create an intelligent European policy, free from both the stale assumptions of the Cold War years and the corrupting Labour battles of the 1970s and 1980s. His acceptance of the need to consult the people over further integration is an encouraging start. But until he understands that European policy, like Labour's constitution, should be more than a dogged adherence to outdated constructs, he will be letting down the very "new" Labour Party that he has been trying so hard to create.

THINK IT THROUGH

Rail privatisation should not limit ticket availability

The greatest threat facing the rail network is not privatisation but lack of ambition. Yesterday, John Swift, the rail regulator, launched a consultation on the future of ticket sales in the reformed system. His proposals ranged from the bland — incremental change — to the wholly undesirable — designation of core stations for ticket retailing. Lacking in his various suggestions was any sense that the passenger's interest will be paramount in the privatised rail service.

At present, through-tickets are available at 1,500 of the network's 2,500 stations. The splitting of the system into 25 separate operating companies ought to be an opportunity to increase the number of facilities offering this basic service; instead, the opposite seems to have been assumed. The most objectionable of Mr Swift's proposals is that a range of "core products" should be identified and that fewer than 300 core stations should be required to offer them. This means, in practice, that through-ticketing would be far more difficult than it is at present. To the so-called "Yeovil question" — would a passenger travelling between Yeovil and Birmingham have to buy more than one ticket? — the answer would be clear and gloomy. Passengers might have to buy two or three separate tickets to make complicated journeys.

Mr Swift's announcement was further evidence of how far astray the rail privatisation programme has gone. When the regulator's proposals were first leaked, Brian Mawhinney, the Transport Secretary, warned that they were "unacceptable". It has since become clear that unless ministers

strong-arm the franchise director, Mr Swift will have his way. The 1993 Railway Act seems to have taken insufficient account of the need for ministers to remain a sovereign court of appeal for regulation during the transitional years of privatisation. As it is, the Government has surrendered too much power too early and is already at the mercy of the regulator.

The provision of through-ticketing should be taken for granted rather than treated as a major issue. Rail privatisation has been presented to the electorate as a more efficient way of running a public service which will benefit the consumer. A network that is trying to attract private investment should go out of its way to make it easier for customers to buy tickets — rather than the opposite. As it is, the suspicion that ticket-buying is about to become hideously complex will put off many who would prefer to travel by train.

The easy availability of airline tickets and money from bank cashpoints has shown how straightforward it is for private sector companies to pool information and collaborate on sales. It should not be difficult for all franchisees operating on the rail system to computerise their timetables and price lists, and make it possible for passengers to buy through-tickets from booths at most stations, paying by credit card or cash. Indeed, providing such information to a database — the management of which could be contracted out — should be a condition of every railway franchise. It was precisely this sort of benefit that privatisation was supposed to bring. Until it does, the public will ask why this reform was ever foisted upon the nation.

MEANWHILE IN MADRID

The González Government hangs on without honour

The recent history of Spain has taught that there can be few acts more futile than to demand the resignation of Felipe González. Had he the inclination to comport himself in a manner befitting the leader of a Western democracy, the Socialist Prime Minister would have relinquished office on at least three occasions in the past two years. His administration, already smeared with corruption, now stands accused of having organised a death squad, the Anti-Terrorist Liberation Group (Gal), which murdered 27 suspected Basque separatists between 1983 and 1987. Appearing earlier this week on television, Señor González told the nation that he "never authorised, covered up, or tolerated the actions of Gal".

His disavowal is striking for two reasons: first, because few in Spain believed him; and second, that it should have been made on television. A poll conducted for the Madrid daily, *El País*, revealed that more than half of those questioned thought that he was lying. The markets, too, have made clear in characteristic language their lack of faith in Señor González. The peseta plunged, compelling Pedro Solbes, the Finance Minister, to deny rumours that Spain would be forced to leave the European exchange-rate mechanism. Only a credible political response — which appears beyond the Prime Minister's capacity — will calm the markets.

In preferring to offer explanations — such as they are — on television, Señor González has once more made clear that he has scorn

for the Parliament to which he was elected. A Prime Minister stands accused of some form of association, however remote, with a death squad: if this is not cause for an appearance in Parliament, it is difficult to see what is. The truth is, of course, that Señor González has never had much time for parliamentary matters: in the 12 years of Socialist rule, the Cortés has been more milked for political advantage than fostered as an institution essential to a newly democratic civitas.

The conservative opposition in parliament, the Popular Party (PP), has been right to press for early national elections. Señor González, naturally, will not oblige the PP. The conservative leader, José María Aznar, could usefully spend time, however, in reforming his own party. The PP's greatest weakness — on which Señor González has played remorselessly — is its failure to come to terms with Spain's modern culture of regional autonomy. Until it does so, voters in Catalonia and the Basque country will continue to be repelled by the PP's image as a "Castilian" party.

Spain faces municipal elections in May. If, as is expected, the Socialists are taught a lesson by an angry electorate, the pressure for change should become irresistible — even for the Prime Minister. So much so that it may be time for a second democratic revolution in Spain. The first, which came with the death of General Franco in 1976, now stands devalued. And no one else is responsible for that but Señor González.

Michael Howard called to account

From the General Secretary of the Association of First Division Civil Servants

Sir, The Home Secretary's claims about his ministerial responsibilities become more remarkable every day. Yesterday he claimed: "With regard to operational responsibility, there has always been a division between policy matters and operational matters. That has existed not only since the introduction of agencies — it has been recognised for years, and indeed for generations." (Hansard, January 10, column 40).

Mr Howard has no constitutional authority for this claim. Moreover, he is either deliberately ignoring his own instructions as a minister or is ignorant of them.

"Questions of Procedure for Ministers", published on the Prime Minister's authority in 1992, well after agencies were established, says categorically:

Each Minister is responsible to Parliament for the conduct of his or her department, and for the actions carried out by the Department in pursuit of Government policies or in the discharge of responsibilities laid upon him or her as a Minister.

The spectacle of a Government minister trying to set new constitutional guidelines to suit the political embarrassment of the day has profound implications for our system of parliamentary government. The extent of ministerial responsibility is well documented and understood by many, if not by the current Home Secretary.

Yours sincerely,
ELIZABETH SYMONS,
General Secretary,
The Association of First Division Civil Servants,
2 Caxton Street, SW1,
January 11.

Imperial echoes

From Dr Roy Turner

Sir, The last of the colonial servants are rapidly disappearing. By the turn of the millennium there will be few if any left and our ability to get a first-hand knowledge of the last days of Empire will have gone for ever. A Museum of the British Empire (letters, January 7) could serve as a repository for unpublished memoirs, records and possibly oral histories.

Policies are determined by governments but what actually happens on the ground depends on the women and men who were there. How much richer would our understanding of the Roman Empire have been if we had had extensive records of the local governors and commanders. The Empire was an extraordinary event. We have a duty to make sure it is properly assessed.

Yours sincerely,
ROY TURNER,
2 Vine Cottage,
Roddell, nr Lewes, East Sussex.

Store of good will

From Mr Graham King

Sir, If Mrs Judith White (letter, December 29; see also letters, January 4) knew the original meaning of "Brownie points" she might not wish to redeem her 50 years' worth.

The term seems to have originated in the early 1900s when a disciplinary system was introduced on Canadian Pacific Railways. Railwaymen earned "demerits" for breaking regulations. They were termed "Brownie points" after a superintendent of that name.

The contradictory meaning seems to be of much later vintage, presumably through an association with the Girl Guides' Brownies.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM KING,
Kingsmore Court, Kingston, Kent,
January 6.

From Mrs Janet M. Kapp

Sir, Brownie points can be recycled. If Mrs Judith White takes them to her local Brownie pack she will find that the experience she needed to gain them can be converted into the skills necessary to help with the Brownies. She will then be in the position of giving Brownie points — from the stock she has accumulated.

Yours faithfully,
JANET M. KAPP
(Brownie Guide),
55 Hove Park Road,
Hove, East Sussex.

Union by force

From Sir Peter Smithers

Sir, It remains to be seen whether Moscow can reduce the Chechens to submission by making their lives impossible. The Tsars achieved this. For Europe there are lessons to be learned from what is happening.

The British, French, Dutch, Portuguese and Belgian Empires, conglomerates of many nationalities, are gone. The last of the empires to disappear was the Russian. Or did it? Russia, extending from Norway to the Pacific and containing many nationalities, is still a conglomerate. Some of its components find Russian rule intolerable and are grudgingly determined to achieve independence. They can only be denied it by force.

The situation in China is similar. Tibet is denied its independence and its identity by force. Muslim areas of western China will seek independence

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 071-782 5000

Daily acts of worship in schools

From Mr Ewan Harper

Sir, I have considerable sympathy with the thrust of your leader, "A Church unimpaired" (January 7). When I was secretary of the Archbishop's Commission on Rural Areas, which produced the report "Faith in the Countryside", I was involved in visits to 41 of the 43 dioceses. We consistently found, in rural parishes, the clergy taking school assemblies. Their contact with primary schools provided a growing alternative to Sunday school.

In my own village one primary school assembly each week is held by the rector in the parish church. This rural experience should be a source of inspiration for a pattern of contact with schools in urban and suburban areas.

Training clergy to develop the skills needed to teach young people effectively certainly could be achieved, provided the will was there. Equally the skills exist to assist lay teachers with taking assemblies.

But we should not overlook the many Christian teachers who take a lead in their schools and help at Sunday schools too. They could no doubt play a leading role in clergy training in forward-looking parishes and at the deanery level.

Yours sincerely,
EWAN HARPER,
Titchmarsh House, Titchmarsh,
Nr Kettering, Northamptonshire,
January 9.

From the Headmaster of Millfield

Sir, Since 1661 the parliamentary day has started with prayer, of which this is part:

Grant that we ... laying aside all private interests, prejudices and partial affections, the result of all our counsels may be the glory of thy blessed Name, the maintenance of true Religion and Justice, the safety, honour and happiness of the Queen, the public wealth, peace and tranquillity of the Realm and the uniting and knitting together of the hearts of all persons and estates within the same ...

There will be many philosophical and theological explanations as to how, after 300 years, the gap between the intentions of this admirable prayer and its fulfilment appears to have widened.

It might even be argued that, were attendance at prayers compulsory for

all members of Parliament, the gap might have narrowed.

One has to assume that it is not compulsory for the good reason that MPs accept that the power of prayer lies in its quality rather than in its quantity. Prayer is, as the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster has described it, "... the sum of our relationship with God"; such a relationship cannot be based upon compulsion.

This being so, while there will always be a strong case for introducing the young to faith and to prayer, the case for compulsory daily worship, even in schools, is as the Archbishop of York points out (letter, January 10), a weaker one.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MARTIN,
Headmaster,
Millfield,
Street, Somerset,
January 10.

From Mr Robert Vint and Mr Peter Talbot Willcox

Sir, Since we founded the Religious Education and Environment Programme (Reep) six months ago we have been welcomed by an increasing number of schools and their teachers, many of whom have reservations about the practicality of customary forms of worship.

We have, however, been able to demonstrate ways in which the curriculum can be enriched and enlivened by the imaginative involvement of teachers and pupils in activities which encourage respect for nature, for other people and for the diversity of the universe.

It is important that the predominant modern scientific and quantitative paradigm be balanced in our schools by activities, whether or not they are called "worship", which acknowledge the spiritual and qualitative dimensions upon which men and women throughout the ages have relied for their sense of unity and purpose.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT VINT (Administrator),
PETER TALBOT WILLCOX
(Trustee),
Religious Education and
Environment Programme,
6th Floor, Rodwell House,
Middlesex Street, E1,
January 9.

Reform of the legal aid scheme

From the President of the Law Society

Sir, Your editorial, "Cost-effective justice" (January 9), rightly recognised the need for reform of the legal aid scheme. But it is essential that any changes should improve access to justice rather than obstruct it.

We spend almost £1.5 billion a year on legal aid, yet far fewer people qualify for assistance than need it. If we are to make access to justice a reality for everybody, we must cut the cost of resolving individual disputes. The Law Society has frequently called for increased emphasis to be given to conciliation and mediation. Any such procedures should be part of the system for all court-users.

Cash-limiting legal aid could deprive those who need help and provide an excuse for the Government to ignore the real problems.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES ELLY, President,
The Law Society,
113 Chancery Lane, WC2,
January 11.

From the Director of the Legal Action Group

Sir, Your editorial correctly stresses the promising nature of the Legal Aid Board's development of contracts

("franchises") with legal aid providers. Your suggestion that consumers would benefit from subjecting these contracts to compulsory competitive tendering is, however, more questionable.

The board itself is against such a development, arguing that exclusive contracts with a restricted number of providers would be justified only where, otherwise, there were insufficient services.

Consumers, as a whole, could benefit from a reduction of cost in legal services because more can be provided within a given budget. However, this can be achieved simply by reducing the cost allowed per case. There is no reason why franchisees might not remain open to any lawyer willing to meet the conditions of cost and quality.

Competitive tendering reduces competition for the contract is awarded. Experience in the United States suggests that, in the longer term, the consequent creation of monopoly or near-monopoly providers leads to lower quality and higher cost.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SMITH, Director,
Legal Action Group,
242 Pentonville Road, NI,
January 6.

NHS pay beds

From Sir Rodney Sweetnam

Sir, No doubt there is good financial reason for encouraging NHS pay beds (letter, January 5), but it is seldom appreciated how much private practice within hospitals can also be of direct benefit to NHS patients.

I was a surgical registrar long before Barbara Castle's misjudged attack on pay beds. My chief was a distinguished orthopaedic surgeon, and like many consultants today part-time and paid accordingly. His private consulting room was in the hospital, and he operated in the private wing.

I hate to think how many times I sought his advice on difficult, often urgent problems. He was available in the hospital practically the whole week, although paid only for five half-day sessions. Everyone benefited from his presence on the spot, most of all the NHS patients, often with difficult fractures new to us juniors but not to him.

Pay beds are returning. The pendulum should swing further and encourage private consulting practice in hospitals as well.

Yours faithfully,
RODNEY SWEETNAM,
23 Wimpole Street, W1.

or amalgamation with Muslim neighbours, and this could only be prevented by force. Russia and China, the surviving conglomerates, are held together only by force.

The current of history is running strongly against the survival of all conglomerates. They do not work in the world of today. Even small ones such as Yugoslavia are now unworkable. National aspirations, if only the desire to live under one's own government and according to one's own culture, have won the day in most of the world.

Yet the political classes of Europe blithely proceed with a political union ruled from Brussels and extending from the Arctic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic Ocean to the

Black Sea: a giant conglomerate containing many seeds of future conflict. The lesson from the Chechens is that such a union could only be held together in the long run by force. As that force is unlikely to be forthcoming, a gradual breakup of the political union is the certain outcome. It would be an unpleasant process.

Europe would benefit greatly from a common market. This is still far from being a reality. The frictions already arising and certain to increase in a political union can only delay and possibly destroy the establishment of that market. There is so much of real value still to be achieved in Europe without engaging in the manifest and dangerous absurdity of a political union. It is a pity that the constitution-makers have run away with the ball.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
PETER SMITHERS,
692-Vico Morcone, Switzerland,
January 11.

Mixed fortunes in NZ paradise?

From Ms M. A. Jackson-Roberts

Sir, When I read Bernard Levin's encomia (January 3 and 6) on the joys of New Zealand I thought that there must be a down side somewhere. Shangri La was invented precisely because it never existed. So it proves to be, with the eruption of the New Zealand flaxworm likely to spell havoc to our native earthworm (Diary, January 10; report, January 11). But then the Garden of Eden was not immune from worm-caused troubles either.

The importation and dispersal of some New Zealand robins could perhaps help to solve the problem; but Murphy's Law would probably dictate the development of a preference for the British native.

Yours faithfully,
M. A. JACKSON-ROBERTS,
Flat 1, 30 Estelle Road, NW3,
January 11.

From Mr Stuart Henderson

Sir, I read Bernard Levin's second account of New Zealand while I was sitting on the Northern line Tube and initially thought it would be another British dig at our little corner of the (ex) British Empire. By the time I had finished, however, my eyes were embarrassingly betraying my emotions in the crowded train.

I appreciated reading such a heart-warming article which reflected my personal feelings in a way which I could never aspire to put on paper. Even the most patriotic "Kiwi" could not match Mr Levin's glowing style.

I wish Mr Levin a speedy return to revisit our wine cellars; meanwhile, he can rejoice in knowing that his produce is freely available in the UK. And, for someone like Mr Levin, it might not be too late to emigrate.

Yours etc,
STUART HENDERSON,
209a Broomwood Road, SW11,
January 6.

From Mr Lionel Docker

Sir, Bernard Levin describes New Zealand as a land unchanged since the Lord created it and declares that "the greatest part of the country is untouched by human hand". Really?

It is true that the islands were once completely covered with lush, sub-tropical forests, but I doubt that the Lord would recognise his creation today. Huge areas of the North Island have been defoliated by generations of European settlers, permanently changing the ecosystem.

The rolling pastures are the creation of man and are mostly green as a result of the thousands of tons of superphosphate dumped on them every year.

Many of the indigenous animals have been made extinct: the great flightless bird, the moa, once in plentiful supply and one of the Lord's most remarkable creations, has not been seen since for at least 50 years; and, most significantly, it has taken the Maori race over a hundred years to recover from the introduction of European diseases, alcoholic substances and the aggression of land-hungry squatters.

Yours faithfully,
L. W. DOCKER,
13 Durham Terrace, W2,
January 9.

From Mr and Mrs J. F. R. Weir

Sir, Our recent visit to New Zealand bears out all that Bernard Levin has admirably written. We would only add that the long lists carved on war memorials in even the smallest village are a poignant reminder of sacrifices made for the benefit of this country in two world wars.

We have much to learn from New Zealanders' earlier loyalty to the Empire. Is it any wonder that they cannot understand our preoccupation with continental Europe and that they must resent having to enter this country by queuing as "foreigners" at immigration?

We are, Sir, yours faithfully,
JAMES WEIR,
ELIZABETH WEIR,
Parford, Chagford, Devon,
January 7.

Playing the game

From Mr Barry Watson

Sir, Whilst I agree with much of your leader, "Try, try again" (January 5), I fear you perpetuate the myth that rugby league is just the professional form. There are over 1,000 amateur clubs in the United Kingdom playing and enjoying the game of rugby league. I coach at schools level in Surrey and Middlesex and the game is open to all, not just the "fit whippets". It is enjoyed by both sexes.

Yours etc,
BARRY WATSON (Secretary,
Surrey Heath Rugby League Club),
40 Fordwells Drive,
Bracknell, Berkshire.

Sports letters, page 45

Anybody there?

From Mr L. J. Manley

Sir, "The 1991 census ... missed a million people" (report, January 6). How do they know?

Yours faithfully,
L. J. MANLEY,
158 Blackmoor Drive, Liverpool L24,
January 11.

Business letters, page 29

Letters for publication may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

After a deluge of advertising, the tour companies discover that their customers are still reluctant to reach for their cheque books

Where have all the bookings gone?

Something odd is going on in the travel business. Overnight, Britain has stopped buying summer package holidays. Immediately after Christmas travel agencies from Caithness to Cornwall, which for weeks had been bustling and buzzing with would-be clients, were suddenly empty as tens of thousands of customers stayed at home, ignoring glossy television advertising campaigns and turning their backs on the biggest discounts ever offered.

The astonishing display of collective behaviour appears to have no common cause yet it occurred evenly across the country and affected both big and small companies. The phenomenon was sufficient to cause serious concern in many of the big travel organisations, who immediately called in their

top management this week for "brain-storming" sessions designed to find out why their best marketing efforts were being ignored.

The idea had been simple — hit them at about Christmas-time with discounts and, as the season is now clearly improving, everyone will rush out and book for two weeks in the sun.

Such a strategy had worked well before and last winter's discounts had produced well over two million bookings in January. Eventually, 11.42 million package summer holidays were taken last year — a 15.5 per cent increase on 1993.

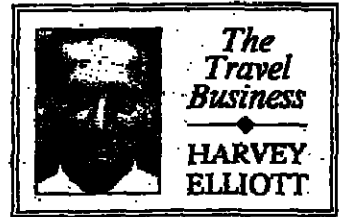
Over the year as a whole almost 16.6 million passengers flew off on holiday and paid an average of £356 each, giving a total revenue to Britain's 1,000 holiday companies of almost £6 billion. Even with profit margins of about 2 per cent, this was still a reasonable return and it seemed that the rise would go on inexorably.

The large high street travel agencies launched a similar campaign this year, starting before Christmas. Extra staff were drafted in to cope with the anticipated surge in demand and tour operators rubbed their hands in eager anticipation of a bumper crop of early bookings. But by New Year's Eve, far from being better, bookings were down by about 20 per cent. Forcing a smile, the trade reasoned that the slump could not possibly go on. Everything would improve in the New Year.

It was, in fact, far worse. By the beginning of this week some tour operators had sold 35 per cent fewer holidays than in the first week of 1994. On average, the whole industry was down by about 30 per cent — whether discounts were being offered or not.

Most are putting on a brave face and calling it little more than "a phase" which will soon pass. Others think the range of discounts are now so confusing that buyers have been put off by the plethora of offers.

By Monday a mood of intense gloom, bordering on despair, was gripping the industry as the best marketing brains tried to work out what had gone wrong and how to put it right. So far, nobody has been able to come up with the answer.



While some destinations are desperate for bookings, Marianne Curphey and David Churchill report on two unlikely success stories

Kenya strikes tourist gold

British tourists are returning in force to Kenya. Tour operators, who saw numbers drop in the run-up to the 1992 elections, are putting together new programmes and reporting a huge increase in business. Some say bookings are up by more than 40 per cent.

Kenya appears to have found fresh popularity with those who might otherwise have gone to The Gambia. Foreign Office advice had been that people without "compelling reasons" to travel to the West African state should still consider postponing their visits. Tourism to Kenya has also increased in spite of an advertising campaign by the South African Tourist Board.

Kenya's appeal lies in its fine white-sand beaches, comparable with the best of the Caribbean or India, and in its game parks, where lion, elephant, rhino and giraffe are abundant. Raitt Orr, consultants to the Kenyan government, said the recent Christmas and New Year holiday had been particularly buoyant and there were some extremely good deals available because Kenya was relatively cheap.

Ash Sefat, a Kenya holiday specialist, said his company Somalia expected to carry a record 25,000 people this year. "Kenya can offer safaris, beaches and good accommodation. Prices start from £700 per person for two weeks and there are daily flights into Nairobi."

However, despite tourists' willingness to try Kenya once again, a firm of leading business risk assessors says little has changed since November 1992, when a number of British tour operators, including Air Tours and Owners Abroad (now First Choice Holidays), pulled out. Tourist numbers began to decline

in 1988 after the death of Julie Ward in the Masai Mara game reserve. First Choice has not included Kenya in its summer 1995 brochure. A spokeswoman said: "We may review our position next season but we would have to be confident that we could guarantee holidaymakers' safety. When we pulled out originally, we did so on Foreign Office advice."

Airtours has gone back into Kenya this summer with both a mass-market and an upmarket programme. Hayes & Jarvis, which has been taking tourists to Kenya for more than 20 years, says the risks to visitors are minimal.

Dedan Morton, its spokesman, said: "Malaria is a real risk throughout much of Africa and the Far East but there are effective anti-malarials on the market. There have been no recent incidents involving tourists in the game parks or on the beaches."

Roger Dunn, Africa specialist with the London-based Control Risks Group, said corruption and ethnic tension are still rife and violence is rising in Nairobi and Mombasa as unemployed youths turn to crime.

"Tourists buses travelling to the far north of the country near the border with Somalia are held up by armed gangs from time to time and

visitors should avoid isolated beaches in Mombasa, where they may be mugged," he said.

Kish Botton, from the Association of British Travel Agents, said: "Tourists are returning because there have been no recent reports of violence and because Kenya is not an unsafe destination. However, visitors are likely to encounter hawkers on the beaches at Malindi and Mombasa. Parts of Nairobi are not really safe, although the game reserves are."

Travellers were also frightened away by reports of a strain of drug-resistant cerebral malaria, still rife throughout the country. It killed Richard Hughes, the brother of the Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes. He caught malaria on honeymoon in Kenya despite taking prophylactics.

Dr Peter Barrett, senior officer with the London School of Tropical Medicine, says Kenya, in common with much of sub-Saharan Africa, is considered a high-risk region. Mefloquine (trade name Lariam) is now the recommended prophylactic rather than the more commonly used chloroquine. Dr Barrett said: "There is no reason for tourists not to go, but proper precautions are essential."

The Foreign Office says game reserves and the main tourist areas are "generally safe" but travellers should avoid the Malindi/Garsen/Lamu road which is vulnerable to attack.

A spokesman said: "Exercise caution everywhere. Muggings can take place at any time. Avoid travelling after dark and do not go about urban areas or coastal towns on foot at night. Avoid isolated places and exercise caution when on beaches. Armed car-hijackings are prevalent in the Nairobi area."



Snap shot: game reserves, where rhino, lion, elephant and giraffe are abundant, lie behind Kenya's appeal to the British

JAPAN is experiencing a boom in British visitors for both business and leisure. In spite of the high value of the yen, the number of tourists from Britain rose by 22 per cent in the first nine months of last year to 35,000.

This brought the total number of British visitors, including business travellers, to just under 90,000. The upsurge in popularity follows efforts by the country's tourism authorities to promote budget travel and hotel accommodation. "Although Japan is often regarded as one of the most expensive places in the world for tourists, costs are no greater than in Scandinavia or Austria," says Patrick Wilson, London repre-

sentative of the Japan National Tourist Organisation (JNTO). "It is quite possible to manage comfortably on £40 a day for accommodation, food and fares, especially outside Tokyo."

More than 500 traditional Japanese inns (*ryokan*), bed and breakfast hotels (*minshuku*) and mainstream hotels, for example, now come under the Welcome Inn reservations umbrella for overseas visitors. These range in price from £15 to £55 per person per night. Japan also has a sophisticated youth hostel network with more than 400 hostels.

with overnight charges ranging from £6.50 to £20. The Japan Railpass offers almost unlimited travel on the national railways, covering all the main islands. Vouchers, however, need to be bought in London before travelling.

JAPAN'S popularity has also developed from an increase in numbers of flights, especially to the recently opened Kansai International Airport. "This has made the Kansai region, Japan's historical and cultural heartland, much more accessible," Mr Wil-

son says. Several UK specialist tour operators are planning to introduce new tours to Japan this year.

With the growth in long-haul tourism to Australia and the Far East, many airlines now allow stopovers in Japan. The cheapest return air fare with Travelbag, the specialist long-haul operator, is £699 with Malaysian Airlines from the beginning of next month until the end of March. Travelbag also has on offer a £797 return fare with China Airlines or £830 return with Virgin Atlantic. The normal economy fare is £993 return (0420 808 28).

● JNTO, 167, Regent Street, London W1T 7JF (0171 734 9638).

Round the world via the land of tango

Australians, the Down Under tour operator, is enjoying a big promotional success with its unorthodox round-the-world trip through Argentina. The conventional way around the globe is to cross North America, stopping in Los Angeles or San Francisco.

By using Aerolineas Argentinas, however, the Aussies are able to round the world travellers through Paris, Madrid, Buenos Aires and Rio Gallegos before getting back onto a more usual flightpath around New Zealand, where they have a stopover in Auckland.

The return journey, using Malaysian Airlines, takes off from Sydney, pauses in Melbourne and stops off in Kuala

Lumpur before Heathrow — a more usual route than the South American leg. English visitors to Argentina need not feel far from home: it has not only tango and polo but also a Harrods, a Hurlingham Club and plenty of cricket. In Rio Gallegos there is even a British Club serving fish and chips.

TIM HEALD ● Tim Heald flew round the world with Australis, Aerolineas Argentinas and Malaysian Airways. Return fares (London-Buenos Aires-Auckland-Sydney-Melbourne-London) start from £1,025 booked through Australis (071-734 7755). Australis can also prebook accommodation, internal flights and tours and offer a selection of round-the-world fares starting from £729.

Holiday bookings at the touch of a screen

Holidays are going on sale through a high street bank for the first time. NatWest is installing touchscreens, travel kiosks in three branches, selling up to one million Thomas Cook holidays as well as its own financial services. Three kiosks in Thomas Cook branches will also sell both services.

From Monday, the "Touch" system will sell city breaks, Disneyland Paris, flights and summer holidays to Spain and late deals. Customers narrow their choice by answering questions such as type of holiday, destination and hotel category.

The kiosks can then display maps of cities showing hotel locations and their proximity to tourist attractions; videos of resorts in destinations such as Majorca and Tenerife; and stills of hotels.

If they decide to book, the kiosk links customers by videophone to Thomas Cook offices in Peterborough, where a clerk checks availability. Customers then book with credit or debit cards inserted into the kiosk and obtain a print-out.

The six-month trial is likely to expand into more travel destinations, with other tour operators and more resort information.

"I am staggered by the

limited amount of information currently available to people," says Tony Bennett, director of strategic marketing at Thomas Cook. "The most expensive purchase of the year is often made on the basis of a 2in x 2in photo in a brochure and half a dozen words."

At a four-month trial already carried out in a Thomas Cook branch in central London, half the holiday bookings were made on the kiosk system. With NatWest joining as a partner, customers will also be able to buy insurance, open savings accounts and apply for a credit card.

STEVE KEENAN

Horror stories forecast

HIGH street travel discounts will lead to a flood of summer holiday "horror stories", it was claimed this week (Harvey Elliott writes). Christopher Kirker, chairman of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), gave a warning that British holidaymakers will have to put up with food poisoning, poor hygiene and badly maintained hotels in return for a 20 per

cent discount on the cost of their package.

"If British tour operators continue to extract the last ounce of flesh from hoteliers in Spain, Greece and other Mediterranean countries, whilst the Germans pay much more realistic prices for their beds, 1995 will see many more horror stories," he said.

The association represents more than 150 small indepen-

dent tour operators, few of whom can afford to offer discounts but who concentrate on individual care. Together they carried 1.75 million holidaymakers a year at an average price of £570 per person.

The companies have produced a combined AITO Directory which gives details of 350 brochures and thousands of holiday options (ring 0891-515948 for a copy).

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TRAVEL IN THE TIMES
Tomorrow
Passport to France: Brittany, Normandy, Provence, Monte Carlo and Gascogne
Saturday
Self-driving holidays
The best of Italy
Mardi Gras in New Orleans

THE TIMES Win the trip of a lifetime to the biggest party in history

Today is day 16 of The Times Millennium 2000, which offers readers the opportunity to spend New Year's Eve 1999 crossing the International Dateline to both Fiji and the Cook Islands to see in the new millennium twice. First prize is a 28 day world air cruise for two culminating in New Year 1999 in Fiji and the Cook Islands to join in the festivities. The trip takes in Dubai, Thailand, Singapore, Tucson, Washington and Sydney. It includes helicopter sightseeing over the Fiji Islands and hot-air ballooning over the Arizona desert, and would cost £64,000 to book in 1999.

A second prize of a ten day stay for two in Fiji and the Cook Islands worth up to £7,000 and a third prize of two tickets chosen from any of the millennium party venues available to readers are also on offer.

Should you be unsuccessful in the competition, you can still take part in the festivities by booking the Fiji and Cook Islands trip separately or taking advantage of our selection of deluxe party venues round the world.

The parties are the brainchild of The Millennium Foundation, a non-profit-making charity which is organising fundraising parties for specific local charities across the world. In St Petersburg, for instance, the money will help restore the Hermitage gallery and fund the Kirov Ballet.

You could, for example, celebrate the new millennium in the home of the movie stars, Los Angeles, and stroll down Rodeo drive by day or Hollywood Boulevard by night. Your stay will be at the Regent Beverly Wilshire hotel, newly restored to its original grandeur, with Italian Baroque stonework, and Aubusson tapestries. The cost is £2,250 per person now or £50 per month per person for five years.

CORRECTION. Please note that question 11 should have read: When did Mexico cede the state of California to the United States?

To enter the competition collect the 18 tokens and answer the 18 questions which are appearing between December 26 and Saturday January 14. Send the tokens and answers on a separate sheet of paper, stating in not more than 15 words why you would like to join in the celebrations, to: The Times Millennium 2000 Competition, 5 Brittons Court, London EC8B 6NG. Closing date January 31, 1995. Normal Times competition Rules apply. Details of how to book the millennium gala parties, which appeared last week, will appear again on Saturday. Further information about the parties can be obtained by writing to: Millennium 2000 Ltd, Freepost GW 7623, Glasgow G3 7BR.



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NEWS

Tories begin to woo back rebels

The Government began wooing back the Conservative Euro-rebels as a Cabinet minister said he hoped their breach with the party would be resolved as speedily as possible.

Five of the nine rebels supported the Government in votes that will retain its majority on the standing committees examining legislation in detail. Four of them abstained but two were understood to be abroad. Those backing the Government were Sir Richard Body, Sir Teddy Taylor, John Wilkinson, Nicholas Budgen and Richard Shepherd. Pages 1, 11, 19

Maurice Saatchi sets up rival agency

Maurice Saatchi is setting up his own rival advertising agency with help from the three Saatchi & Saatchi executives who resigned earlier this week in protest at his dismissal last month from the agency he formed in 1970. Pages 1, 25, 27

EU veto threat

The European Union was facing a constitutional crisis after the Socialist majority in the parliament threatened to veto Jacques Santer's new European Commission. Page 1

Church 'too left-wing'

The senior chaplain at Eton has condemned the Church of England for having become politically correct, left-wing and sectarian. Page 1

Amis book deal

One of the publishing world's most bitter and protracted auctions finally ended when Martin Amis clinched a two-book deal with HarperCollins for a sum in the region of £500,000. Page 1

Chechnya peace call

President Dudaev of Chechnya made his first public appearance for almost two weeks and called for a peaceful end to the conflict with Russia. Pages 1, 13

£700,000 payout

A High Court judge has ordered Christie's to pay almost £700,000 to an art dealer for a painting ruled to be a forgery under the company's conditions. Page 3

Oxbridge challenge

The heads of Oxford and Cambridge colleges are uniting behind a legal challenge against the London club which bears their name in protest at its treatment of women. Page 5

How stars emerged in 'empty' sky

Astronomers exploring what was believed to be an empty quarter of the sky have discovered 50 galaxies. The Bootes Void, 700 million light years from Earth and 500 times the size of the Milky Way, was believed to be empty of stars. It turns out that there are plenty there, but they are too dim to be easily spotted. Page 7

Japanese excluded

Japan will not be represented at the ceremonies in Britain to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Far East. Page 8

Ticket sale curbs

An 80 per cent cut in the number of railway stations where passengers can buy through tickets is one option being considered, the independent rail regulator has confirmed. Page 9

Goodwill gesture

The Pope left Rome at the start of an Asian tour after a gesture of goodwill toward Buddhists irritated by what some saw as an offensive reference in his recent book. Page 12

Singapore debate

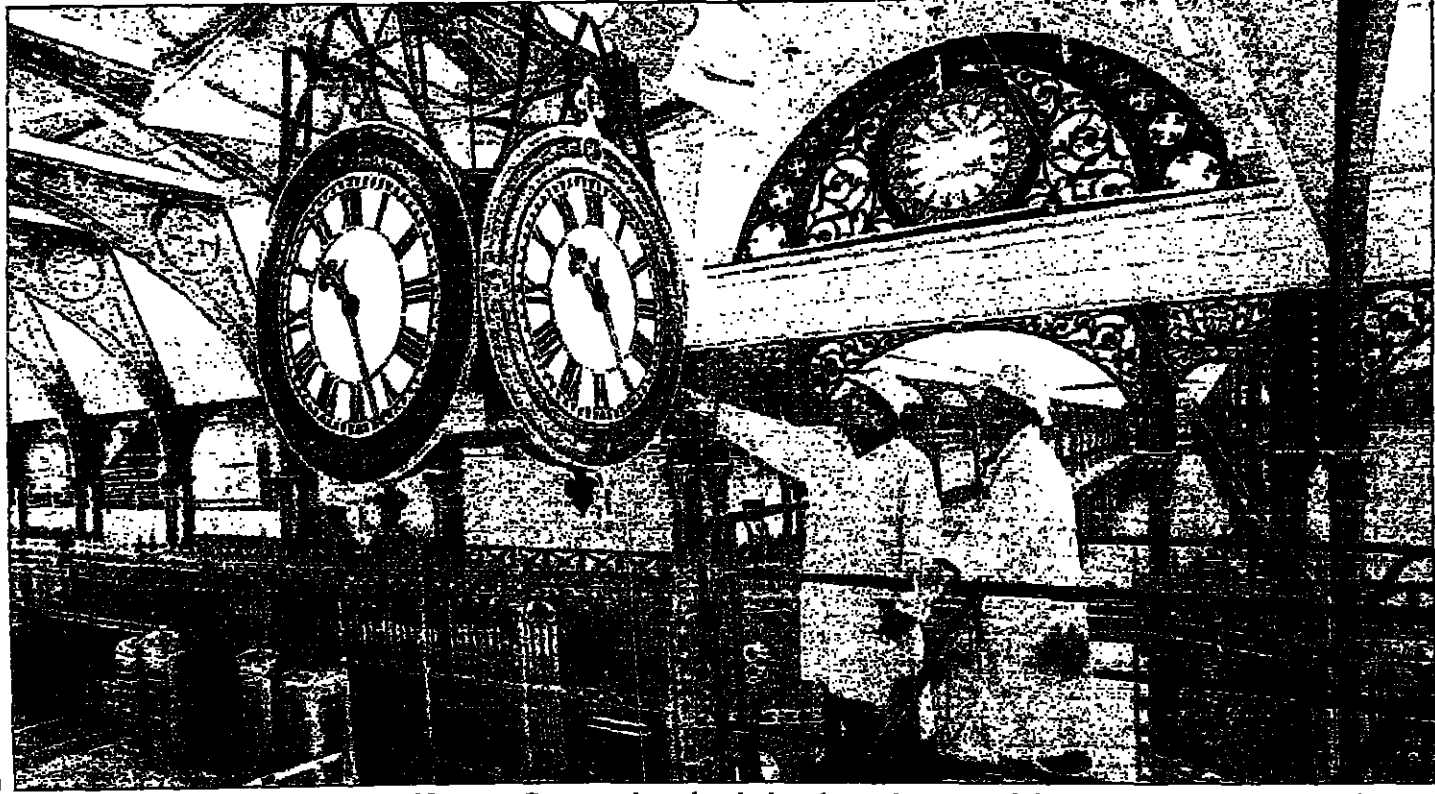
The Singaporean Government is attempting to define the limits of political debate that it will tolerate in the island city-state, which has moved from squalor to become a world economic power in three decades. Page 15

Croatian threat to UN

President Tudjman of Croatia has said that the 15,000 United Nations peacekeepers must leave the country. Page 13

US flood chaos

Mudslides, gridlock and flooding brought chaos to much of California, as the San Francisco area emerged saturated from more than a week of rain. Page 14



Traders Joseph Deadman, left, and Norman Gregory take a close look at the newly renovated clock at Smithfield Market, London

BUSINESS

Economy: Factory output fell sharply in November. Seasonally adjusted figures showed manufacturing output was 0.7 per cent lower than in October. Page 25

Banking: Paribas, the French investment bank, is to build a new headquarters in Marylebone to accommodate all of its UK operations. Page 25

Jobs: Staff in National Westminster Bank's retail division will today receive a letter outlining plans for further job cuts. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 11.0 points to close at 3049.4. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 79.2 to 79.3 after a rise from \$1.5600 to \$1.5605 and from DM2.934 to DM2.9357. Page 28

Cricket: Darren Gough flew home from the tour of Australia after suffering a stress-fracture of the left foot. He should be able to resume training in mid-March. Page 46

Football: Peter Shilton, the former England goalkeeper who had been suspended on full pay for a week, resigned as manager of Plymouth Argyle. Page 48

Ice hockey: National Hockey League players have accepted the final offer from club owners to end a lockout. The season is expected to start next week. Page 44

Rugby union: Scotland have made nine changes to the side that lost 34-10 to South Africa for the game against Canada on January 21. There are two new caps, Eric Peters and Stewart Campbell. Page 43

Women on board: Twenty-one of the best-known women in America begin the first in a series of grueling heats for the America's Cup. Tom Rhodes reports. Page 16

Fertility breakthrough: A new test-tube baby technique should bring hope to thousands of infertile couples. Page 17

100 years on: As it celebrates its centenary, the National Trust spreads its net wider. Page 22

Back to Africa: Julie Ward's death meant a decline in tourist numbers to Kenya. Now British holiday-makers are returning. Page 23

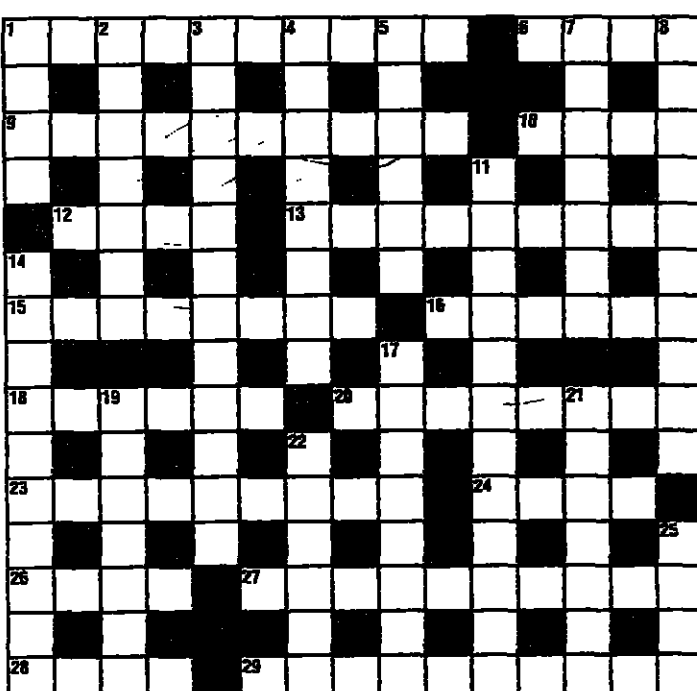
IN THE TIMES

PRETTY IN PUNK
Siouxsie and the Banshees turn romantic on their latest album

JUMP START
The complete colour guide of point-to-points this season



THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,750



- ACROSS**
- Audience standing up, well-pleased with one's address (5-5)
 - Not a great deal of notice (4)
 - Entered in a death rattle (10)
 - Vessel for runner-up in race (4)
 - Marine detachment (4)
 - And 16: Roman marbles missing (3,5,6)
 - Said sale was fiddled and became aggressive (8)
 - See 13 ac (6)
 - It's all right to return a large amount of money (6)
 - A pound of sultanas (8)
 - About time to correct the height indicator (9)
 - Where barristers get refreshers? (4)
- DOWN**
- Stretchers-bearers? (4)
 - Reveals United Nations demand in writing (7)
 - Means being out of employment? (6,6)
 - Advanced in a rush, but thought better of it (8)
 - Introned, perhaps, but not given due recognition (6)
 - Primate filling role as a source of protection (7)
 - Soldering irons start making an electronic device (10)
 - Fail to win a single game and get annoyed (4,3)
 - A gift for dishonesty? (10)
 - Directions for making machine parts (8)
 - Used for hanging pirate captain holding up vessel (7)
 - Neckline that may bring out a whistle (7)
 - Macbeth, for example, is following bearing fuel (6)
 - A slight incoherence in speech (4)

Solution to Puzzle No 19,749

ACROSS
1. AUDIENCE
2. NOTICE
3. RATTLE
4. VESSEL
5. DETACHMENT
6. MARBLES
7. AGGRESSIVE
8. SEE
9. MONEY
10. POUND
11. ABOUT
12. WHERE
13. STRETCHERS
14. REVEALS
15. MEANS
16. ADVANCED
17. INTRONED
18. SOLDERING
19. FAIL
20. GIFT
21. DIRECTIONS
22. USED
23. NECKLINE
24. MACBETH
25. A SLIGHT

Times Two Crossword, page 48

TIMES WEATHER

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, call 0800 550 550 or visit our website at www.times.co.uk/weather

Greater London: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

South East: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

South West: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

West Midlands: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

East Midlands: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

North East: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

North West: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

Yorkshire: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

East of England: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

West of England: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

South Wales: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

North Wales: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

Scotland: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

Ireland: Partly sunny, with a few clouds. High 12, low 8.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic forecasts, 24 hours a day, call 0300 401 401 or visit our website at www.aa.co.uk

London & SE: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M25 and M4.

South East: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M20 and M25.

South West: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M5 and M6.

West Midlands: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M6 and M5.

East Midlands: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

North East: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

North West: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

Yorkshire: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

East of England: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

West of England: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

South Wales: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

North Wales: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

Scotland: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

Ireland: Traffic is expected to be heavy on the M1 and M2.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Tuesday's highest day temp: 16°C. Lowest day temp: 8°C. Highest night temp: 10°C. Lowest night temp: 4°C.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 6:02 am. Sun sets: 4:16 pm. Moon rises: 4:06 am. Moon sets: 1:01 pm.

AROUND BRITAIN

General: low pressure east of the UK will maintain a northerly airstream. Cloud and rain will reach the north-west later.

England and Wales will be mainly dry with clear or sunny spells, apart from wintry showers, chiefly near East Anglia. Scotland and Northern Ireland will be dry at first but rain, preceded by snow on hills, will reach the north-west by midday.

London, Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands: dry with clear or sunny spells. Wind light to moderate northerly. Max 12°C (54°F).

SE England, E Anglia, E England: mainly dry with clear or sunny spells, but isolated wintry showers at first near the east coast. Wind fresh to strong northerly, moderating later. Max 12°C (54°F).

Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales: mainly dry with clear or sunny intervals. Winds light northerly, becoming westerly. Max 12°C (54°F).

N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland, N Ireland: dry then rain spreading from west. Winds light northerly, becoming fresh to strong southwesterly. Max 10°C (50°F).

NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: mainly dry, with some wintry showers, then light rain spreading from the west. Winds fresh to strong northwesterly, moderating then becoming southwesterly and strengthening. Max 10°C (50°F).

Outlook: milder with some rain.

AROUND BRITAIN

City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Aberdeen	10	London	12	London	12
Cardiff	10	Manchester	10	Manchester	10
Edinburgh	10	Newcastle	10	Newcastle	10
Glasgow	10	Nottingham	10	Nottingham	10
Leeds	10	Sheffield	10	Sheffield	10
Liverpool	10	Sunderland	10	Sunderland	10
London	12	Wolverhampton	10	Wolverhampton	10
Manchester	10	Wrexham	10	Wrexham	10
Newcastle	10	York	10	York	10
Nottingham	10				

ABROAD

City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Algeria	14	Paris	10	Rome	15
Amman	15	Prague	10	Sabrosa	15
Algiers	15	Stockholm	10	Santiago	15
Ankara	15	Sydney	10	Sao Paulo	15
Athens	15	Taipei	10	Seoul	15
Bahran	15	Tokyo	10	Singapore	15
Bangkok	15	Toronto	10	Strasbourg	15
Beijing	15	Valencia	10	Stuttgart	15
Berlin	15	Vancouver	10	Sydney	15
Buenos Aires	15	Vienna	10	Taipei	15
Bombay	15	Warsaw	10	Tokyo	15
Buenos Aires	15	Washington	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Wellington	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Winnipeg	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Yokohama	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Zurich	10	Toronto	15

Temperatures at midday local time. X = not available

AROUND BRITAIN

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London, Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands: dry with clear or sunny spells. Wind light to moderate northerly. Max 12°C (54°F).

SE England, E Anglia, E England: mainly dry with clear or sunny spells, but isolated wintry showers at first near the east coast. Wind fresh to strong northerly, moderating later. Max 12°C (54°F).

Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales: mainly dry with clear or sunny intervals. Winds light northerly, becoming westerly. Max 12°C (54°F).

N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland, N Ireland: dry then rain spreading from west. Winds light northerly, becoming fresh to strong southwesterly. Max 10°C (50°F).

NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: mainly dry, with some wintry showers, then light rain spreading from the west. Winds fresh to strong northwesterly, moderating then becoming southwesterly and strengthening. Max 10°C (50°F).

Outlook: milder with some rain.

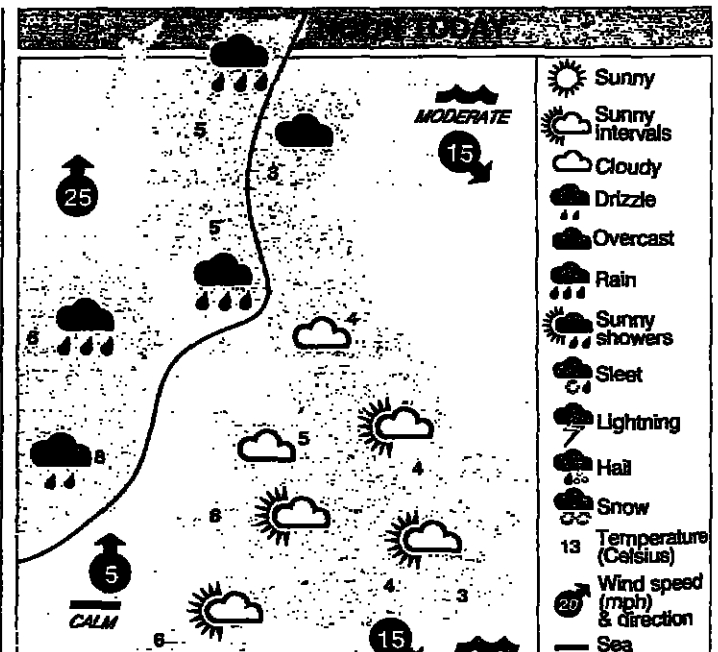
AROUND BRITAIN

City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Aberdeen	10	London	12	London	12
Cardiff	10	Manchester	10	Manchester	10
Edinburgh	10	Newcastle	10	Newcastle	10
Glasgow	10	Nottingham	10	Nottingham	10
Leeds	10	Sheffield	10	Sheffield	10
Liverpool	10	Sunderland	10	Sunderland	10
London	12	Wolverhampton	10	Wolverhampton	10
Manchester	10	Wrexham	10	Wrexham	10
Newcastle	10	York	10	York	10
Nottingham	10				

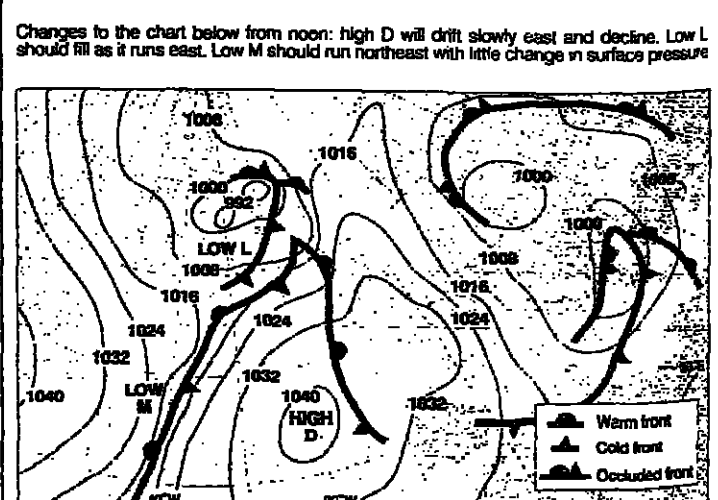
ABROAD

City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Algeria	14	Paris	10	Rome	15
Amman	15	Prague	10	Sabrosa	15
Algiers	15	Stockholm	10	Santiago	15
Ankara	15	Sydney	10	Sao Paulo	15
Athens	15	Taipei	10	Seoul	15
Bahran	15	Tokyo	10	Singapore	15
Bangkok	15	Toronto	10	Strasbourg	15
Beijing	15	Valencia	10	Stuttgart	15
Berlin	15	Vancouver	10	Sydney	15
Buenos Aires	15	Vienna	10	Taipei	15
Bombay	15	Warsaw	10	Tokyo	15
Buenos Aires	15	Washington	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Wellington	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Winnipeg	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Yokohama	10	Toronto	15
Buenos Aires	15	Zurich	10	Toronto	15

Temperatures at midday local time. X = not available



Changes to the chart below from noon: high D will drift slowly east and decline. Low L should fill as it runs east. Low M should run northeast with little change in surface pressure



HIGH TIDES

Location	AM	HT	PM	HT	Location	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	10:26	5.90	10:52	5.97	Leith	11:26	4.84	11:51	4.88
Aberdeen	10:27	3.70	10:48	3.72	Liverpool	10:28	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:28	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:29	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:29	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:30	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:30	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:31	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:31	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:32	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:32	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:33	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:33	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:34	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:34	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:35	7.38	11:01	7.41
Aberdeen	10:35	3.70	10:48	3.72	London	10:36	7.38	11:01	7.41

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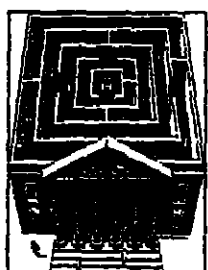
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الجمعة 150



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BOOKS 40, 41
A look at the land of the quango



SPORT 42-48
England cricketers at a loss after Gough flies home

TEENAGE POP FANS: THE BARE FACTS
Arts 37-39

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook THURSDAY JANUARY 12 1995

Cut in output takes City by surprise

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S industrial activity dropped in November, suggesting that the boom conditions enjoyed earlier in 1994 are slackening off. The Central Statistical Office (CSO) said that manufacturing output fell by 0.7 per cent in November compared with City expectations of a rise of 0.3 per cent. The annual rate of manufacturing growth fell back to 4.5 per cent from 5.2 per cent. Total production, which includes the North Sea, fell by 1 per cent.

It was significant that there were no special one-off factors — although warm weather in November contributed to a sharp fall in energy usage — and that one of the largest falls in activity came in the key engineering sector, which had previously delighted economists with its strong performance.

The City had been expecting another rise in industrial production and said that yesterday's figures weakened the case for higher interest rates — at least to the extent that some pessimists have been forecasting. Rates are still expected to move higher again but any action may now be delayed somewhat while the authorities monitor developments in industry against a background of weakening consumer demand.

The minutes of the December 7 monetary meeting published yesterday showed that although Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, counselled the half-point increase in base rates announced that day, his case was not unambiguous.

Whereas in past published minutes, it has been Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, who

has emphasised weakening consumer confidence, this time Mr George clearly shared these worries. He said he was concerned that a rise might be interpreted as a sign that the Bank thought inflationary risks were greater than they actually were.

Mr George also noted that there remained a dichotomy between the strength of manufacturing sector and the "more cautious personal sector".

It is ironic in the light of subsequent economic evidence that Mr George's main argument in favour of the December rate rise was upward revisions to third quarter gross domestic product figures and also the fact that "industrial production had remained strong in October".

After the December meeting, third-quarter GDP growth was revised downwards. Yesterday's fall in industrial production covered the month after the one cited by the Governor.

Taking the latest three months compared with the previous three — the comparison

favoured by the CSO — manufacturing was still 0.8 per cent ahead, but this was the lowest three-month on three-month growth rate since January 1994, suggesting a genuine slowdown in industrial activity.

Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Brothers, said that yesterday's figures were not dramatically weak but still suggested that the strong pace of industrial expansion seen earlier in 1994 had slowed.

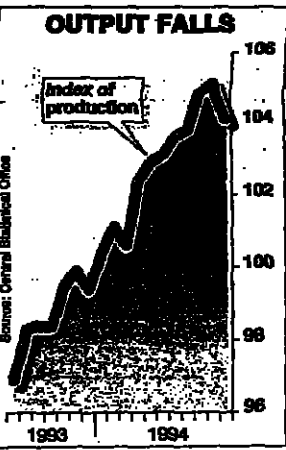
Even if these figures are subsequently revised upwards, he believes that GDP growth in the fourth quarter will not match the performance of the third.

More months of figures will be needed before it can be certain whether industrial growth is slackening off.

That is certainly not the picture picked up in surveys from the Confederation of British Industry, which suggest continued buoyancy. But Mr Saunders noted that weakening demand in the housing, cars, and retail sales sectors may already have had a knock-on effect on industry.

Somewhat disappointing for the Government, which is hoping for a sharp rise in industrial investment this year, was November's 2.2 per cent fall in the production of investment goods compared with October's level.

US consumer prices rose by only 0.2 per cent in December, lower than the market expected and confirming that inflationary pressures remain subdued despite economic growth that is still healthy.



Economic View, page 29

Further job cuts at NatWest

By ROBERT MILLER



Lord Alexander, left, NatWest's chairman, and Derek Wanless, the chief executive

STAFF in National Westminster's retail division will today receive letters outlining plans for further job cuts; details of the proposals were handed to the bank's regional directors yesterday.

The latest round of job losses at NatWest coincides with the start of the bank reporting season: the TSB announces its year-end results today. NatWest reports on February 21. The high street clearers are expected to report a further huge increase in pre-tax profits with a collective year-end figure of more than £8 billion against interim profits last summer of more than £3 billion.

In its letter, NatWest will present staff with a series of options. These include the offer to apply for redundancy, the chance to reduce the number of hours worked and the possibility of accepting a downgrading in staff position in return for a one-off compensation payment. Part-time staff will be offered the alternative of cutting the hours they work even further.

The bank declined to put a headline figure on the number of job cuts that it wants to achieve. Last year, however, it shed more than 4,000 staff and it is understood that it would like to achieve a similar level this year.

Last August, NatWest, which over the past four years has been closing its branches at a rate of around 130 a year, reported a record 83 per cent increase in its half year pre-tax profits to £767 million.

NatWest said last night: "The package of options which we will be outlining to staff today will give us flexibility to meet our business needs in the foreseeable future."

The latest round of job cuts is certain to provoke the anger of banking unions. Since 1990, more than 110,000 bank staff have lost their jobs. And they will point to the fact that banks have achieved a turnaround in their fortunes not so much by an increase in business but more because they have cut jobs, closed branches and reduced general overheads.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET		
FT-SE 100	3048.4	(-11.0)
Yield	4.23%	
FT-SE All share	1513.15	(-3.41)
Nikkei	19548.47	(+47.02)
New York		
Dow Jones	3845.54	(-21.20)
S&P Composite	458.22	(-2.36)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	5 1/2%	(5 1/2%)
Yield	7.85%	(7.85%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Life long gilt	100%	(100%)
Future (Mar)		
STERLING		
New York	1.5583*	(1.5615)
London		
\$	1.5577	(1.5579)
DM	2.3228	(2.3283)
FF	6.2510	(6.2500)
SP	1.9571	(1.9575)
Yen	155.66	(155.40)
£ Index	79.3	(79.2)
GOLD		
London		
DM	1.5333*	(1.5338)
FF	5.3035*	(5.2965)
SP	1.9571	(1.9575)
Yen	99.91*	(100.11)
£ Index	63.1	(63.1)
Tokyo close Yen	99.88	
GOLD (1994)		
Best 15-day (Mar)	\$16.20	(\$16.05)
GOLD		
London close	\$376.05	(\$374.35)
* denotes midday trading price		

Electric storm

The 12 regional electricity companies have squandered £250 million on their loss-making electrical retail chains, according to Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, their biggest competitor. Page 27, *Tempest 28*

Skill shortage

The Government's funding of adult industrial training programmes is already proving inadequate to meet the skill shortages that are emerging with economic recovery, say those in charge of the business-led Training and Enterprise Councils. Page 26

British Coal land portfolio for sale

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH COAL is to offer its entire 150,000-acre property portfolio for sale this spring in packages targeted at investors and property developers. The sale, expected to raise more than £100 million, will complete privatisation of the former state coal company after 48 years in the public sector.

British Coal said bids from its farming tenants who have expressed "serious interest" in buying properties would be considered. A drawback clause will be included in some sales agreements in an effort to ensure that the Treasury can benefit from any subsequent redevelopment profits.

The National Farmers' Union welcomed the last-minute concession to tenants but said it wanted to know what was meant by "serious interest". It said there are 238

tenant farmers on British Coal land and many who had sought to buy their farms in the past had been rebuffed.

Sir David Naish, NFU president, said: "These tenants must have the necessary safeguards to ensure that the land which is central to their farming business remains secure under new landlords."

Concerns over security of tenure may be shared by tenants of the 800 homes which are being offered for sale.

Ray Proctor, British Coal's director of privatisation, insisted that tenants had extensive statutory protection. However, he acknowledged that some farmers could face rent increases if the blight of prospective open cast coal extraction was removed by the disposal.

BAe retracts hospital £8m claim

BRITISH AEROSPACE has been forced to retract its claim that an £8 million investment in a private Glasgow hospital complex was part of an offset deal to underpin military aircraft sales to Abu Dhabi (Ross Tieman writes).

The 260-bed Health Care International went into receivership in November. Last week, Abu Dhabi Investment Corporation, which invested just £500 in the collapsed company, was named preferred bidder to acquire the hospital.

BAe yesterday said its £8 million investment was not part of any offset agreement connected to its £150 million sale of 18 Hawk jet trainer aircraft to the Gulf state.

It said it invested in the Clydebank hospital "to further extend good relations with those countries with which it does business".

Paribas to build Marylebone HQ

By CARL MORTISHED

PARIBAS, the French investment bank, is to build a huge headquarters in Marylebone to accommodate all its UK operations. It has bought Marylebone Gate, a 2.3-acre site next to Marylebone station, and intends to construct a 350,000 sq ft seven-floor office building.

The development, which is conditional on planning approval from Westminster Council, will more than double Paribas's floorspace in London. The bank's 1,100 staff are occupying a 70,000 sq ft building on Wigmore Street and a further 70,000 sq ft in two buildings near by. The move to Marylebone is expected in 1997.

The site was sold by Railtrack and Lymington, a BAA subsidiary, for an undisclosed sum, but Paribas could be

investing more than £50 million in the new building alone. Market estimates of building costs for a top specification headquarters are between £135 and £150 a square foot. Paribas will also have to meet existing Westminster planning requirements for a development that includes 51 flats.

The plan will be a blow for Canary Wharf, which was heavily tipped as a location for the bank. Ewart Glendinning, a Paribas spokesman, said the bank had found the West End convenient for clients and staff.

Paribas plans to develop the site using its in-house property team and if planning approval is obtained it expects to appoint a contractor this year. Paribas has tripled the size of its London operations since 1986.

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Can Saatchi & Saatchi stop its former employees from working?

Pointers for plugging a leak of talent

By RONNIE FOX AND IAN HUNTER

SAATCHI & SAATCHI may now be painfully aware that the most valuable assets of a business are the employees. Employers try to protect themselves against former employees giving away confidential information, working for a competitor, or taking away clients or employees, with post-termination restrictive covenants in contracts. They normally refer to a time period, geographical area or even a list of clients. For the covenants to be enforced the employer must show he has a legitimate interest to protect, such as confidential information, a client base or goodwill. They must not be excessively restrictive given the interests they protect. The test

of what is reasonable varies according to circumstances. The courts attempt to balance the employer's right to protect his legitimate interests against the employee's right to earn a living. In one Scottish case a restriction on an employee working for a competitor for five years was considered unreasonable. In another a restriction preventing employees setting up in competition within 1,000 metres of their former workplace was unenforceable.

Recently it was said that covenants against enticing away employees could only ever be enforceable if restricted to employees vital to the employer's business. Restrictions drafted too widely will not be enforced.

The temptation to dismiss disgruntled employees summarily should be resisted. Post-termination restrictive covenants are automatically unenforceable if employees are dismissed in breach of contract.

If an employee fails to comply with the terms of an enforceable restrictive covenant the employer can sue for damages if he can prove a loss. But quantifying the loss can often be difficult. The employer can ask for an injunction to prevent the former employee from dealing with certain clients or working in a particular area. But employers concerned about the flight of confidential information can only seek an order permitting the search of an employee's home in extreme circumstances.

A more subtle form of restriction has

become popular. A garden leave clause entitles the employer to insist that the employee serves out a long period of notice at home. Such a clause, however, would not stop former Saatchi employees from taking preparatory steps such as seeking premises and forming a company. If the employer does not keep up salaries and benefits he risks a claim for breach of contract.

In considering such garden leave clauses courts must weigh up the danger posed to the employer's business by a breach of the clause and the problem the employee may face if his skills are impaired during a period of enforced idleness.

Ronnie Fox and Ian Hunter are employment specialists at Fox Williams, the City of London law firm

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□ Charlotte Street under siege □ Swift taste of politics for rail regulator □ Swiss Bank Corp's clever blunder

Creative hypertension

□ EVEN those unfortunate souls now crouched under the table in the basement of Saatchi & Saatchi's Charlotte Street headquarters would have to concede that Maurice Saatchi is currently some way ahead. How the game will turn out remains to be seen.

Great fuss has been made over the brothers Saatchi's decision to sell shares last week. Maurice Saatchi has insisted that the sale took place in the afternoon on January 3, well after he said he would be severing all links.

This puts them in the clear. Certainly anyone perspicacious enough to buy this newspaper that morning would be off rather than take up the sop thrown to him by the company he founded, the chairmanship of Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising Worldwide.

But the prospects for his fledgling business are far from certain. The advertising grapevine, an overheated and etiolated plant at the best of times, has been swamped by any number of rumours of his next move. He is supposed to have had lunch last week with Frank Lowe of Lowe Howard-Spink — probably not, according to those who know him. He is meant to have talked to the huge Japanese agency Dentsu — ditto, although the Japanese would clearly not be averse to such a link.

The first three defectors are hoping to join him early, and much of the weight of legal opinion would seem to support them, but the news from the Saatchi & Saatchi camp was that they would fight this all the way, so the new agency's birth pangs can expect to be accompanied by some untidy legal skirmishing.

The departure yesterday of some creative types is seriously bad news for the Charlotte Street camp since it does suggest the rot is spreading. Yesterday's emigrés, who left bemoaning their disillusionment with a business so much at the mercy of "external forces" — are your ears burning, Mr Herro? — will presumably fetch up with Mr Saatchi as and when convenient.

But there is a difference between walling yourself up in shiny new offices with a few like-minded souls and being able to compete out in the real world with the big boys. New Saatchi will presumably have to contract out its media buying from the off, for example. Clients like British Airways are putting the pressure on their existing agency, but there is no

guarantee they will come across with any or all their existing account. Other agencies keen to prey on Saatchi & Saatchi's business may find themselves tangled up in conflicts of interest with their existing client lists.

The pretty pass it has all come to is summed up by the affair of the missing files. Maurice apparently departed last week with a few private documents from his office, prompting complaints from his old firm. The offending files, presumably photocopied till the ink faded, were returned and now reside under lock and key at Charlotte Street. When former friends fall out...

Second-class tickets

□ JOHN SWIFT, QC, the rail regulator, has been given his first taste of the political perils facing any regulator trying to make compromises. It may prove a blessing. The instant outrage should make the public take notice of bigger issues exercising the regulator. These should become clearer in his



imminent paper on access charges for train operators.

In theory, Mr Swift is charged, among other things, with getting customers value for money. In reality, that means trying to preserve as much as possible of the services when future private operators have less money available, for much of the annual subsidy to BR is effectively to be converted into capital and sold to the public via Railtrack.

To cope with this, the regulator, acting for consumers, is performance running on tracks parallel to the franchise director, acting for the Transport Secretary. This shows in the proposals for ticket-selling at stations. These cannot be driven by private operators, who have

yet to appear. So they must be cooked up by the franchise director, hived-off British Rail operators and the regulator. It should not be wildly expensive to convert most manned stations to the more complex universal ticketing needed when there are dozens of operators. But the new arrangements have to make room for future cost-cutting that will be needed before the private sector works its hoped-for magic.

The concept of core stations, a bedrock of 294 from the 1,300 currently manned, should be seen in this wider context. These stations must be properly staffed, not just for ticketing. Many more, however, may need to become unmanned or have only a skeleton staff. To prescribe a full ticketing service everywhere would pre-empt future operators' scope to cut station costs.

Tickets might still be sold more widely than the prescribed minimum. But that, like much else, depends on how much operators have to pay to Railtrack and how much of the charges vary with income. The more charges are fixed, to make

Railtrack attractive to investors, the less operators can afford to carry overheads such as station staff and ticket terminals.

Cuckoo-clock in the nest

□ SWISS Bank Corporation, the adviser to Trafalgar House in its £1.2 billion bid for Northern Electric, has stirred up a hornet's nest of protest over its innovative financial engineering. Jack Cunningham, the Shadow Trade Secretary, yesterday asked Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, some tough questions about SBC's activities under the cosy blanket of absolute privilege against any libel action that Parliament enjoys.

The dispute centres around the contracts for differences that SBC wrote to allow Trafalgar to profit from the rise in the electricity sector prompted by its bid and to offset the considerable fees that SBC is charging. The legality of these contracts seems to rest on an interpretation of the new insider dealing laws. Whatever other charges the

Labour Party may lay at SBC's door, it cannot accuse the group of disloyalty to client. How many other merchant banks have ever offered clients such an opportunity to offset their fees? Indeed, not many merchant banks have derivatives teams with sufficient skill to dream up such a package. Despite such skill, SBC has certainly blundered in its handling of the bid by being too clever.

When it was planning the offer for Northern, it surely must have been aware of the extreme political sensitivity of making the first hostile bid for a privatised utility. Particularly since Trafalgar is 25 per cent owned and effectively controlled by a large overseas corporation.

Given that any bid for an electricity company was likely to elicit angry shouts from the Labour Party, it would have been more sensible for Trafalgar to run the bid completely by the book, and even try to reach an agreed deal with Northern's management. After all, Trafalgar has taken the trouble to offer Northern's customers a £20 kick-back to go along with the deal.

The furore caused by the contracts only make an MMC reference more likely, which cannot be in Trafalgar's interests since it will drag the bid out well into the summer. There are times when cleverness is best avoided.

Dixons accuses RECs of £250m cross-subsidies

By MARTIN WALLER, DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

THE 12 regional electricity companies have squandered a quarter of a billion pounds on their loss-making electrical retail chains, according to Stanley Kalms, chairman of Dixons, their biggest competitor.

Mr Kalms, a long-time critic of what he claims is unfair competition from the regional companies, has renewed his assault, claiming the majority of their shops are making huge losses and are kept going by cross-subsidies from the companies' profitable core distribution businesses.

Dixons was announcing interim figures that contained an upbeat trading statement for Christmas. Pre-tax profits for the 28 weeks to November 12 increased from the £17.3 million announced last time, before exceptional charges of £214 million, to £26.6 million. Dixons has commissioned its own internal auditors to look at the accounts of the 12 regional electricity companies, who have always denied cross-subsidy, to assess just how much the retail businesses have cost them.

The Office of Fair Trading and the electricity industry

watchdog, Oftec, rejected similar claims from Dixons in 1993. But Mr Kalms claimed his company had fresh evidence, including an estimate that total retail losses for the electricity distributors since their privatisation in December 1990, including an assessment of how much interest they lost from tying up capital in such unprofitable assets, amounted to £250 million.

"The regional electricity companies are out there making no profits or minus profits," he said. "They are profligate, and still subsidising their retail outlets. Their shareholders will in due course have to pay the price."

At the half-way stage like-for-like sales at the core Dixons electrical goods stores were down 4 per cent, although across the group and allowing for new openings total sales were ahead by 9 per cent to £698 million.

Earnings per share, on an adjusted basis, were up from 1.8p to 3.7p, and the group is paying an interim dividend increased from 1.7p to 1.8p.

The market was more concerned about prospects for

Christmas trading. John Clare, the managing director, said profits for the first eight weeks of the second half were well ahead of the same period last year. Gross margins had been higher, while sales had risen by 5 per cent.

"I think we've had a very good Christmas and we've tucked away a great deal for this year," Mr Kalms said. "In the light of successful trading over Christmas and the January sale, the outcome for the year should be favourable."

He made light of fears that the business might be affected by the recent ruling from the Office of Fair Trading on extended warranties on electrical goods.

"I don't think it will be particularly material," he said. "From our experience sales of warranties have remained fairly consistent. We will vary the product and find the right price for the market."

There was some concern on the stock market about sales trends, however, which was sufficient to reduce Dixons' share price by 2p to 199p.

Tempos, page 28



John Clare, managing director, was upbeat about Dixons' Christmas performance

United Biscuits to shed 980 staff as KP plant closes

By CARL MORTISHED

UNITED BISCUITS is closing down its KP crisp and snack manufacturing plant in Grimsby, Humberside, with the loss of 980 jobs. The closure follows a strategic review of KP's operations which face intense rivalry because of price competition in crisps.

Shares in United Biscuits fell 2p to 319p after the company warned that hot weather had affected biscuit consumption, while snack foods were continuing to suffer from price competition. The company yesterday forecast that 1994 profits before exceptional items would be close to the 1993 level of £182 million.

The factory, run by KP, the snack division of United Biscuits, produced a quarter of the group's crisp output and is being closed to reduce costs. Most of the production will be transferred to KP's plants on Teesside and in Ashby de la Zouch by September where 460 jobs will be created, leaving a likely net loss of 520 jobs.

Part-time employees account for 730 of the jobs lost. David Williams, National Secretary of the GMB Union, said that the workers of Grimsby were paying the price for the battle between the supermar-

kets over food prices. "Most of the workers at KP are young women who work part time. Finding new work will be very difficult," he said. United Biscuits said redeployment opportunities would be sought throughout UB and assistance would be given to staff in their search for work.

Closure costs of £21 million will be shown as a charge in the 1994 accounts, but only £6 million is cash-related, the company said. UB is suffering from a price war caused in part by overproduction of crisps. The company has also lost margin in a switch in sales to supermarkets from branded to cheaper own-brand products. UB will be spending £12 million on increasing capacity at the Teesside and Ashby factories but expects savings of £6 million a year from the closure.

John Warren, finance director, said the crisp market was growing more slowly in the UK after rapid growth in the 1980s. United Biscuits is focusing its expansion in the Far East, in particular China, where sales growth remains strong, and the company plans to build further biscuit and snack food plants.

Tempos, page 28

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- 85% FASTER THAN A TYPICAL 486SX 25MHz
- Fast 120Mb hard drive, 4Mb RAM - max 32Mb
- UMC 40MHz "Green" chip - Energy Star compliant
- VESA local bus motherboard - 3 VESA slots
- 512K SVGA video card
- 14" VGA colour monitor
- 102 keyboard & DOS 6
- Windows 3.11 & mouse

£499

ZENITH 486SL SUB-NOTEBOOK

- Intel 486SL 25MHz low power processor
- Fast 170Mb hard disk, 4Mb RAM
- Hi-res mono VGA LCD display
- MS-DOS 6 & Windows 3.1
- 2 FLOPPY DRIVES

£750

TANDON PAC II 486DX2

- 486DX2 66MHz processor
- Fast 420Mb hard disk, 8Mb RAM
- 14" SVGA col. monitor, 512K SVGA card
- LIMITED OFFER SOFTWARE DEAL
- MS-EXCEL 4 (spreadsheet, graphics)
- MS-WORD 2 (US ver.)
- DOS 6 & Windows 3.1

£899

AMSTRAD PCW COMPLETE WP SYSTEMS

- PCW 9256 Complete Word Processor, 3.5" drive, mono screen and dot matrix printer.
- PCW 9512+ 512K RAM, 3.5" drive mono screen, letter quality daisywheel printer.

£199 **£250**

FUJITSU BREEZE BUBBLE JET

- 160 CPS draft, 80 CPS NLD.
- HP Deskjet plus mode
- 300 dpi & graphics mode
- NORMAL PRICE £249

£150

DTK 486DX 33MHz MULTIMEDIA SYSTEM

- 486DX 33MHz processor, fast 170Mb drive
- 4Mb RAM - max 32Mb, 512K SVGA card
- 14" hi-resolution SVGA colour monitor
- Philips CM 205 (s/speed) CD ROM drive
- 8 bit sound card & speakers
- Keyboard, DOS 6 & Win 3.1

£699

Morgan

64-72 New Oxford Street, London WC1
179 Tottenham Court Road, London W1
34 Edgemon Road, Haggerley Road, Birmingham 16
11-12 Station Approach, Piccadilly, Manchester 1

071-255 2115
071-636 1138
021-452 1141
061-237 1111
021-456 5555

Pentos statement fails to soothe City

By LIZ DOLAN

A LACKLUSTRE trading statement from Pentos, whose Athena subsidiary failed this week, did nothing to soothe City jitters about the troubled stores group yesterday.

Pentos, which also owns Dillon's bookshops and the Ryman's stationery chain, reported an improvement in sales for all three businesses in the final six months of last year.

The shares, however, already on the slide following the Athena debacle, slipped a further 1p to 10½p.

Ryman's slumped total losses from £4 million in the first half to around £1 million in the six months from July, but like-for-like sales grew by just 1 per cent in the second half.

Stripping out the contribu-

tion from the now-defunct personal computers chain, Ryman's Computer, however, the core stationery and services side improved by 5 per cent in the final quarter.

Sales growth at Dillon's, which includes the Claude Gille discount chain, was still affected in the third quarter by earlier action to clear old and redundant stock, the company said.

Business at Dillon's improved by 5.4 per cent in the final three months in comparable outlets. An 8.6 per cent increase in sales during December included an 11 per cent improvement in the week before Christmas.

Pentos reports higher margin levels for both Dillon's and Ryman's over the period.

Wesleyan to cut jobs

WESLEYAN Assurance society, the former friendly society founded in 1852 by Methodists in Birmingham, yesterday announced that it is to cut 350 jobs (Robert Miller writes).

The life office, which still has its head office in Birmingham, said that the job losses would be spread across 70 UK offices where 1,100 field staff are employed. A further 350 people work at the company's headquarters.

Lowry Maclean, managing director, said: "We hope to achieve the staff cuts through natural wastage, early retirement and voluntary redundancy. We have reached the painful decision after a major review of our business." Mr Maclean said that Wesleyan

wanted to maintain its track record of competitive payouts and that the job cuts were necessary because of increased competition in the life industry and the new regulatory regime.

He added: "We will get as many of our staff as want to through the new training and competence programme. But some of the older ones may prefer to take early retirement."

As well as life and pensions business, Wesleyan also has a home loans operation and a savings bank. Its annual premium income last year was £148 million.

The company has maintained its church connections and links with the Salvation Army.

CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT	*Six months ended 31 Dec 1994	*Six months ended 31 Dec 1993	*Year ended 30 Jun 1994
Revenue	10,488	9,233	20,511
Income from investments	626	473	1,099
Surplus on realisation of investments	530	170	359
Interest received	4	4	21
Sundry revenue	11,648	9,407	21,424
Expenditure and amounts written off	1,834	1,102	5,947
Administration and general	997	1,026	2,053
Exploration expenses	837	76	1,817
Amounts written off investments	-	-	75
Profit before tax	9,814	8,305	21,477
Tax	-	(301)	(302)
Profit after tax	9,814	8,006	21,175
Earnings per share			
- basic	32	28	71
- diluted	17	17	52
Dividends			
- per share - cents	5,208	5,208	15,830
- absorbing - R000	1.9	1.6	1.4
- times covered			

* Unaudited

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET	*At 31 Dec 1994	*At 31 Dec 1993	*At 30 Jun 1994
Investments	149,708	183,391	149,738
Properties and resources	135	135	135
Net current assets/liabilities	6,903	(1,269)	2,467
Current assets	156,746	184,257	152,140
Cash	13,176	4,621	14,482
Other	8,812	891	9,313
Current liabilities	4,964	3,730	5,267
Share capital	156,746	184,257	152,140
Reserves	88,425	88,425	88,425
Investments	68,321	95,832	63,715
Liabilities	156,746	184,257	152,140
Market value	618,302	507,372	587,472
Excess over book value	469,920	323,307	439,760
Book value	148,382	184,065	148,212
Unaudited	1,326	1,326	1,326
Shares in issue unchanged at 30,635,201			
Net assets (as valued) per share - cents	2,158	1,739	2,015

* Unaudited

NOTES

Dividend

The final dividend No.37 of 35 cents per share, in respect of the year ended 30 June 1994, absorbing R10 722 000, was declared on 2 August 1994 and paid on 21 September 1994.

Prospects

Profits during the latter half of the current financial year remain dependent on the rand gold price received by those gold companies which form a substantial portion of this company's investments. It is not expected that net earnings will improve significantly during the second half of the current financial year compared to those reported for the first half.

DECLARATION OF INTERIM DIVIDEND

Dividend No. 38 of 17 cents per share has been declared in South African currency, payable to members registered at the close of business on 27 January 1995.

Warrants payable on 22 February 1995 will be posted to members on 21st February 1995.

The standard conditions relating to the payment of dividends are obtainable from the share transfer offices of the Company.

The register of members will be closed from 28 January to 3 February 1995, inclusive.

Registered and Head Office:

73 Fox Street
Johannesburg 2001

On behalf of the board:
A J Wright
(Chairman) Directors
M J Tagg

11 January 1995

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

B&E price doubles as two investors buy 154m shares

IT MUST have seemed like Christmas again for shareholders of Black & Edgington, the troubled retail supplier, as they watched the share price more than double after two investors picked up almost 30 per cent of the company between them.

Ian Gowrie-Smith, the man credited with turning Medeva into a leading player in the pharmaceutical industry, has bought 33 million, stretching their combined holdings to 29.76 per cent of the issued share capital. Mr Gowrie-Smith has been appointed chairman, while Mr Wray and David Lees, another former Medeva man, have joined as non-executive directors.

Both men paid up for their shares and back yesterday as the price rose to 24p. The speculators were quick to jump on the bandwagon in the belief that Mr Gowrie-Smith intends to use Black & Edgington as a vehicle to make acquisitions within the pharmaceutical industry. By the close of business last night, trading in Black & Edgington shares accounted for 110 million out of total stock market turnover of 662 million.

The rest of the equity market spent another volatile day with all eyes focused on Wall Street after President Clinton's instructions to the Treasury and Federal Reserve board to help bail out Mexico.

Share prices in London opened on a cautious note but rallied strongly on the back of encouraging manufacturing output figures and publication of the minutes of the last meeting between Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor, and Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor.

But Wall Street's failure to respond positively to the latest consumer prices and earnings numbers alarmed London. In the event, the FT-SE 100 index, which had earlier reversed an 18-point fall, eventually closed 11 down at 3,049.4.

Shares of Saatchi & Saatchi remained in free fall, losing a further 4p at 108p as executives continued to jump ship. It stretches the fall in the share price during the past three days to 52p. The company's



UB finished 2p down on news of closure of a KP plant

problems were also compounded by confirmation that Maurice Saatchi, the founder and former chairman, is setting up a new agency. Brokers fear the move could provoke a war between the two companies over major accounts.

A further four executives resigned yesterday, bringing the total to seven since Mr Saatchi severed his links with

run by the same management. Lucas Industries firmed 2p to 196p on the back of Tuesday night's dinner with institutional investors arranged by Henderson Crosthwaite. The outcome confirmed the brokers' positive stance. Henderson expects profits in the first half to more than double to £20.7 million and has pencilled in £140 million for the

down in KP snacks manufacturing plant at Grimsby, Humberside, with the loss of almost 1,000 jobs. Plans are afoot to transfer production to Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, and Teesside by September. UB blamed overcapacity within the industry and said it had put aside £21 million to cover costs. As a result, pre-tax profits for 1994 were expected to be little changed on the previous year's £18.8 million. Smith New Court, the broker, said that it had cut its forecast to £176.5 million.

Smith New Court was also busy picking up a further 3.77 million shares in Norweb at 805p as the group completed its buy-back programme.

Dixons retreated 1p to 200p in spite of unveiling half-year figures towards the top end of expectations. Pre-tax profits were 54 per cent ahead at £26.6 million. The group said trading in the run-up to Christmas had been strong with a further improvement in margins.

Fortis, down 3 1/2p at 244p, is considering an offer for its remaining 24 per cent stake in the German merchant, Britain's biggest contract caterer from Sodexo, the French company. The offer is said to value Gardner Merchant at £730 million. Gardner Merchant was the subject of a £402 million management buyout in 1992 and was expected to come to the stock market later this year.

GILT-EDGED: Gilts rallied from a cautious start, cheered by the latest economic news on both sides of the Atlantic. But a later move by the Bank of England to cut the prices of the remaining parts undermined sentiment with brokers now convinced that details of another auction will be revealed tomorrow.

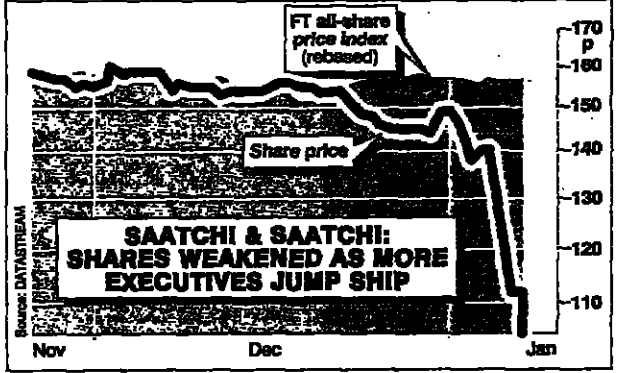
In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished just a couple of ticks better at 110 1/2, as the number of contracts completed more than doubled from recent low levels to 33,500.

In longs, Treasury 9 per cent 2012 was six ticks stronger at 103 1/2, while at the shorter end Treasury 9 1/2 per cent 1999 rose 1/2 to 102 1/2. NEW YORK: Wall Street shares lost ground in early trading as a rally attempt ran into profit-taking. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 21.2 to 3,845.54 at midday.

Lloyds Abbey fell 5p to 336p on a savage profits downgrade by James Capel, the broker. Capel is believed to have cut its profits forecast for the current year from £350 million to £230 million, while Nikko Securities added salt to the wounds by urging clients to switch into the Prudential, up 4p at 313p.

the company last week after being forced off the board by a minority group of disgruntled US shareholders. Before his resignation, the shares had been trading above 150p.

On Tuesday, Charles Scott, chairman and chief executive, attempted to reassure brokers and institutional shareholders on both sides of the Atlantic that nothing had altered with the business continuing to be



New York (midday):
Dow Jones 3845.54 (-21.2)
S&P Composite 493.32 (-2.36)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 19548.47 (-47.02)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 7392.75 (-148.97)

Amsterdam:
BSE Index 411.73 (-1.23)

Sydney:
ASX 1899.3 (-3.6)

Frankfurt:
DAX 2061.08 (+0.95)

Singapore:
SEAC 2145.49 (+8.49)

Brussels:
General 7779.32 (-6.49)

Paris:
CAC-40 1849.13 (-10.08)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 546.00 (-0.10)

London:
FT 30 2814.1 (-1.8)
FT 100 2476.4 (-4.3)
FTSE Mid 200 2476.4 (-4.3)

FTSE Euro Stoxx 100 1314.96 (-2.10)
FT A All-Share 1515.15 (-1.41)
FT Non Financials 1445.30 (-1.48)

FT Gold Index 216.1 (-4.8)
FT Phed Index 105.22 (-0.16)
FT Govt 50s 90.48 (+0.23)

Bargains
SEAC Volume 662,300
US\$ (Domestic) 145.37 (-0.08)
US\$ (Foreign) 145.37 (-0.08)

German Mark 1.5008 (+0.0008)
Exchange Index 79.3 (+0.1)
Bank of England Official Rate 1.5000

ESBIE 1.5000
KPI 145.3 Nov 2.00% Jan 1997 100

Asset Management Inv (100) 99
BSkyB 245%
British Assets Gwth 62% +

Caledonian Media Wts 51
Clydebank 168
First Kuss Front (100) 99

Fleming Nat Res (100) 91
Gen & Col Eng C (100) 92
Gen Micro Us (500) 508

Hill Rite 102
Hydro Intl (80) 84
Innovative Techs (120) 123

Investors Capital 87
Invista Cap Inc An 36%
Klin Capital (100) 100

Lazard Bria Ida 54% +
Lazard Bria Ida Wts 32 +
Log & Gen Rec (100) 96

MICB Group (3) 34
Mitsui Lloyds Inv (100) 85
Penex Oil 105

RM (175) 206
Residential Prop 103
SeaPerfect (120) 130

TeleWest Coms (182) 169 +
Wellington Under (100) 102
Woodchester Units 125

Hewlett N/P (68) 31
Powell Dutton N/P (440) 64
Trio N/P (25) 4

Vesta N/P (34) 4
Walker Green N/P (90) 7

RISES:
RMC Group 943p (+10p)
Assoc Brit Food 580p (+11p)
Cello 580p (+12p)

M250 580p (+12p)
Carns Milling 284p (+10p)
GKN 580p (+10p)

FALLS:
Berleys 576p (-13p)
Laporte 703p (-14p)

Closing Prices Page 32

Done to a crisp

GRIMSBY'S redundant crisp-makers will draw little comfort from the thought that part of United Biscuits' problem is greater prosperity. The British are eating less food in general and less junk food in particular. Consumption of crisps is growing at a tiny rate compared with ten years ago when the market was expanding at 4 per cent or more.

The past is catching up with the snack food manufacturers who built up capacity in the 1980s only to be left with a mountain of fried potato chips, which are periodically released on the market in an orgy of discounting. As the product takes on the characteristics of a commodity food, retailers demand own-brand versions and impose lower margins on crisp-makers like United Biscuits' KP, leaving the company squeezed from all sides: a flat market, overcapacity and price deflation.

UB's response has been to go where the customers lead: upmarket into more expensive junk food. Hence, the takeover of Philas Fogg and the focus on higher margin snacks rather than crisps. But long term, UB needs a market with room to grow around the waist and one less obsessed with healthy eating.

That market is likely to be in Asia. The company has a 90 per cent interest in a plant in China churning out 10,000 tonnes of biscuits a year and UB wants to build more. If neurotic Europeans like to measure their wealth by their propensity to eat disorders, the less developed world is happy munching its way through a growing up packet. But China is unlikely to solve UB's problems at home just yet and yesterday's announcement of closure costs could be a signal that there are more to come.

Dixons

THE stock market was taken a little aback by news from Dixons Group of falling sales and rising margins. Most market-watchers had expected things to be the other way around, with sales rising and gross margins flat. Such concern seems unfair, not least because the combination of the market should really be worrying about flat sales and flat margins, and that was not Dixons' experience over the important Christmas trading period.

By the end of the day earlier share price falls had been halved, once Stanley Kalms, the chairman, had hammered home the message that he viewed margin protection as the key to future growth. Christmas trading generally was well ahead of expectations.

Cray Electronics

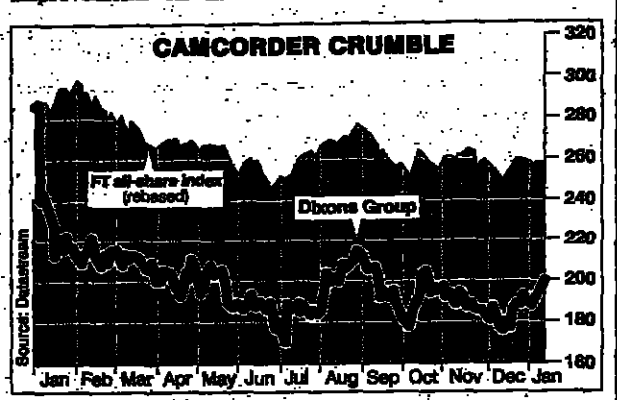
CRAY Electronics has been such an undiluted success in the past three years that the City was perturbed by a less dramatic set of figures. The group is reaching an uncomfortable transitional phase. Having built a sizeable data communications and systems business by acquisition, it must now expand them organically. It has made a sales office, new products, sales offices and marketing alliances that increased sales within the communications division by 10 per cent and expanded margins.

More worrying is Cray's rapid dissipation of cash. A £17.2 million reserve has been whittled away to £2 million in six months, with most of it being sucked up by working capital. Quite why a non-capital intensive business needs so much working capital is unclear, and the group needs to improve on that position in the second half to calm investors' nerves.

helped by the contribution from higher-ticket items like the new CD multi-media centres.

Dixons' market share ranges from 30 per cent for some electronic products to 19 per cent in others but on a mixed basket of products the group probably has about 19 per cent overall. Further improvements on this will

come through the extension of product ranges and the opening of larger out-of-town stores such as Currys superstores and PC World, but at the expense of higher capital spending. For now the shares, on a relatively low forecast of £90 million for this year, sell on 11.5 times earnings, a 15 per cent discount to the sector.



Crax Electronics

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COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COCOA
Mar 1009-1056 May 1009-1056
Jul 1009-1056 Oct 1009-1056
Dec 1009-1056

ROBUSTA COFFEE (C)
Mar 2750-2780 May 2750-2780
Jul 2750-2780 Oct 2750-2780
Dec 2750-2780

WHITE SUGAR (C)
Mar 3023-3042 May 3023-3042
Jul 3023-3042 Oct 3023-3042
Dec 3023-3042

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION
Average livestock prices at representative markets on January 11

Cattle
Gilt 75.85 117.18 121.16
Eng 75.85 117.18 116.99
Fries 75.85 117.18 116.99
Herd 75.85 117.18 116.99
Lamb 75.85 117.18 116.99
Pork 75.85 117.18 116.99
Sheep 75.85 117.18 116.99
Turkey 75.85 117.18 116.99

COMMODITIES

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS \$/barrel FOB
Brent 16.35 -0.35
Brent 16.35 -0.35
Brent 16.35 -0.35
Brent 16.35 -0.35

SPOT CIF NW Europe (grain delivery)
Premium 16.35 -0.35
Brent 16.35 -0.35
Brent 16.35 -0.35
Brent 16.35 -0.35

W TONES INTERMEDIATE (Brent)
Mar 16.35 -0.35
May 16.35 -0.35
Jul 16.35 -0.35
Oct 16.35 -0.35
Dec 16.35 -0.35

W TONES INTERMEDIATE (Brent)
Mar 16.35 -0.35
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W TONES INTERMEDIATE (Brent)
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W TONES INTERMEDIATE (Brent)
Mar 16.35 -0.35
May 16.35 -0.35
Jul 16.35 -0.35
Oct 16.35 -0.35
Dec 16.35 -0.35

COMMODITIES

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

WHEAT
Mar 107.35 May 107.35
Jul 107.35 Oct 107.35
Dec 107.35

BARLEY
Mar 107.35 May 107.35
Jul 107.35 Oct 107.35
Dec 107.35

RICE
Mar 107.35 May 107.35
Jul 107.35 Oct 107.35
Dec 107.35

SOYBEAN
Mar 107.35 May 107.35
Jul 107.35 Oct 107.35
Dec 107.35

WHEAT
Mar 107.35 May 107.35
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WHEAT
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Dec 107.35

COMMODITIES

FT-SE 100

Mar 3049.4 May 3049.4
Jul 3049.4 Oct 3049.4
Dec 3049.4

FT-SE 250

Mar 3049.4 May 3049.4
Jul 3049.4 Oct 3049.4
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FT-SE 100

Mar 3049.4 May 3049.4
Jul 3049.4 Oct 3049.4
Dec 3049.4

FT-SE 100

COMMODITIES

Period

Open High Low Set Vol

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COMMODITIES

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COMMODITIES

Period

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Dec 3049.4

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Jul 3049.4 Oct 3049.4
Dec 3049.4

EMPIUS
to a crisp

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Anita upsets
Environment

ANITA RODDICK's Body Shop has been highly successful in blending profits with the ecosystem. Her performance has, I learn, not been as remarkable where planning applications are concerned. John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, has just rejected a planning appeal for a Body Shop sign outside a listed building in Chichester, a decision warmly welcomed by a district council opposed to advertising in the heart of the cathedral city. Gummer's department judged that the proposed dark-green hanging sign would be visually harmful. Roddick earlier lost an appeal against Arun District Council over a signboard on which she aired her personal philosophy outside her original HQ at Littlehampton. Perhaps she should turn to Teresa Gorman, Tory MP for Billericay, for comfort.

Power hair

JUSTIN Urquhart-Stewart, of Barclays Stockbrokers, was drying his hair when the new TV ad for National Power and PowerGen came on. Just as the ad spoke of an "impressive release of power", his dryer blew up and burst into flames. This powerful sign followed a curious day that embraced a meeting with the Chechen ambassador and an interview with an Alsatian dog. Who says City life is dull?

Thrilling issue

UNFITTING as the linkage may seem, Hargrave Hale, the Blackpool stock-broking firm, is offering a free ride on the resort's "Big One", the world's tallest and fastest roller-coaster, to anyone buying Generator shares through their share shops.



"If they don't like the campaign maybe they should change agencies"

Tinvitation

AS THE deep scars of the 1985 tin crisis heal, London is still far from wanting the return of the International Tin Council. Britain has, however, held on to the International Tin Research Institute (ITRI) in its new form. Funding from the Association of Tin Producing Countries dried up last month, forcing the organisation to go private. Rod Bedder, the new managing director, tells me that the prospects for tin are brighter than for ages. The ITRI's backers are big producers from the Pacific Basin, Latin America and Europe. South Crofty, the only surviving British tin producer, has been invited to join too, and smelter and consumer firms are equally welcome.

Russian riddle

GERARD DE GEER, Swedish chairman of Brunswick, the Russian stockbroking company, is pleased with the first 18 months of his highly profitable Moscow venture. But office life is not problem-free on Tsvetnoy Boulevard. "Have you ever tried explaining to a Russian what a Chinese Wall means?" he asked me yesterday.

COLIN NARBROUGH

Big stock markets look good
but beware in the Far East

The dollar will be strong, the yen weak and bonds could turn out riskier than equities.

In the four years that I have been using the first Economic View each January to hazard a few guesses about the economic and financial outlook, I have consistently found that the financial predictions have come out better than the ones on economics and policy. Last year produced the starkest contrast yet between some fairly astute financial predictions and wildly inaccurate ones on the economy, as discussed here on December 22. This year, I have accordingly decided to concentrate on financial markets, leaving my views about economics and politics for the months ahead.

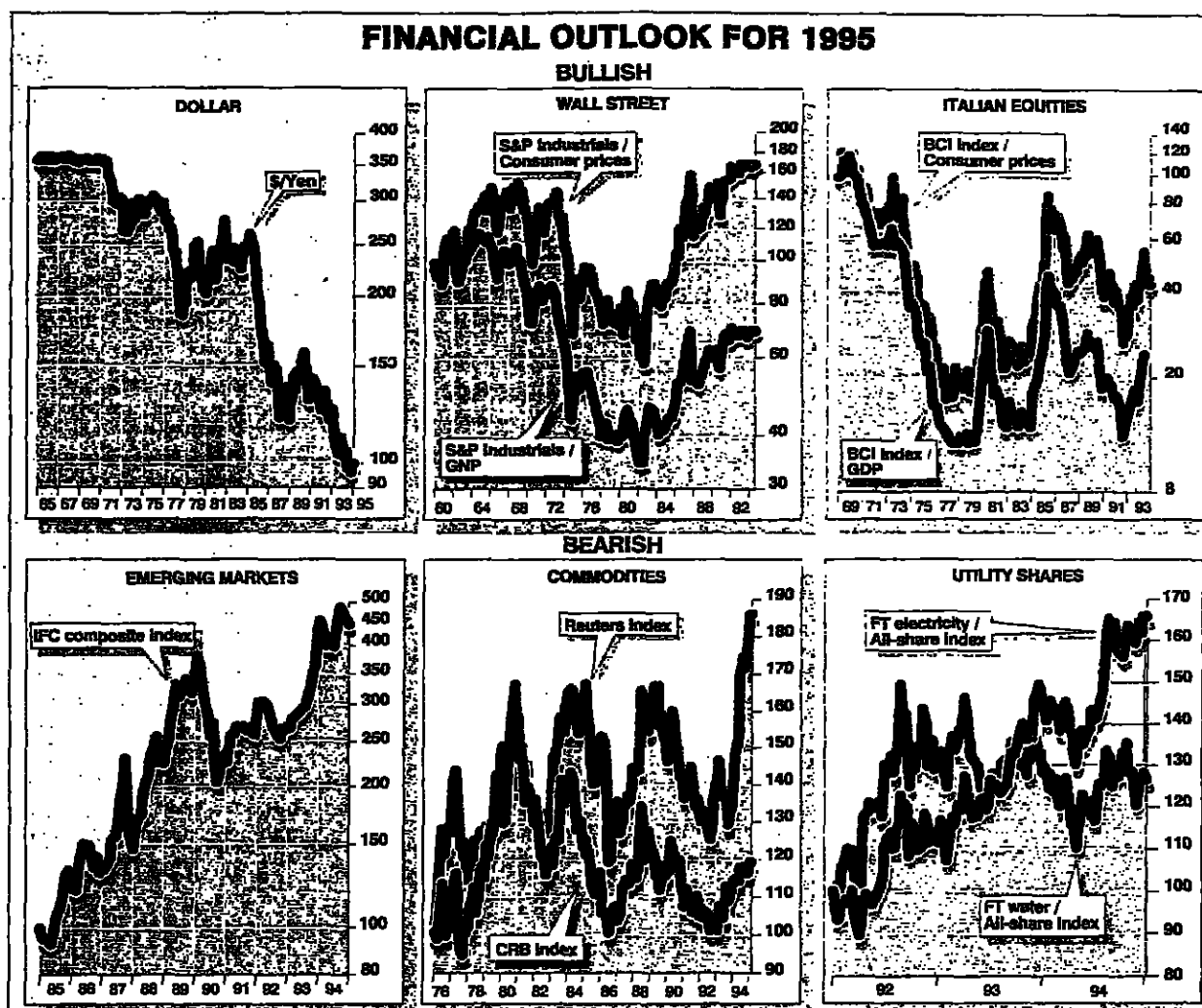
Normally, I try to stick my neck out and look for financial ideas not yet accepted as conventional wisdom in the media and the markets. But this year such contrarian thinking is difficult; analysts and investors have become exceptionally cautious after last year's bloodbath in the bond markets, and there is simply no strong consensus on most economic issues today.

Nowhere is the caution and lack of consensus more evident than in the currency and bond markets. On currencies, the main global issue is, as usual, the fate of the dollar and there seems to be an even match between the dollar bears and bulls. Personally, having been on the side of the bears for most of the past ten years, I switched in the autumn. For reasons discussed in detail here on December 15, I suspect the long-term downward trend in the dollar may finally be over.

With American industry now operating at full capacity, America no longer has anything to gain from an undervalued dollar, which is merely stoking inflation. An upward move by the dollar towards its purchasing power parity (but still stopping well short of it) is therefore now in the interests of America's politicians, industrialists and voters. And American interests, as perceived by Americans, have always been the dominant factor in G7 initiatives and major currency realignments in the past.

As capital flows out of Japan and, more importantly, as American investors become increasingly disillusioned with global diversification, the dollar should move quite sharply upwards against the yen. While the forward market is forecasting a dollar-yen exchange rate of around 95 by the end of 1995, I would expect it to end nearer 120. The dollar should also strengthen against the mark and the pound, but by a smaller margin.

Overall, the yen looks like becoming the weakest major currency of 1995 as Japanese investors realise that are missing the chance of a lifetime to



buy up foreign assets on the cheap.

On long-term interest rates, many analysts believe that the worst is now over and expect a recovery in bond markets around the middle of this year. Boringly, I agree. I would, however, add a qualification. It may well be that bond markets all over the world are now undervalued (and this is especially true of British gilts), given the excellent prospects for inflation, the still moderate pressure on world savings and the probability that the Federal Reserve Board's monetary tightening will be over by the middle of the year.

One of the first signs that the monetary tightening is nearly over will be a turnaround in commodity markets. A fall in many commodities now seems imminent, as evidenced by the weakness of mining shares, though not yet of the commodity indices themselves. Before the present worldwide economic expansion is over, commodity prices will doubtless rise even higher, but the speed of their run-up last year was exaggerated by speculation and a year of falling prices probably lies ahead.

But even if fears about inflation subside, as I think they soon will, bonds are unlikely to produce spectacular returns for investors. The losses suffered in the bubble of 1993-94 were so enormous that huge speculative positions are still waiting to be unloaded. Before a major bond rally can get started, a period of healing will be required, even after the economic fundamentals have turned benign.

The same technical argument can be put another way, which has some unexpected financial implications. What investors should have realised in the past year is that bonds are a very risky type of

investment, and one that is very difficult to diversify or hedge. In fact, far from being a safe haven for widows and orphans, bonds have turned out to be riskier than equities — standing on its head the conventional wisdom taught in undergraduate economics, but vindicating the judgment traditionally made by British and American pension fund trustees. The implication is that bonds must carry a risk premium and produce an expected return higher than that available from equities. To do this, bond yields will have to remain relatively high.

What about equities? Many analysts argue that equity markets are on the brink of a crash, or at the very least are badly overvalued relative to bonds. I believe, on the contrary, that several leading equity markets, which were looking rather expensive a year ago, are now quite attractive. The best major market of all is the one that most investors are united in shunning — Wall Street. London and Tokyo look quite attractive, too.

If you believe, as I do, that the world is now in the early stages of long non-inflationary expansion, similar to the 1950s and 1960s, this is a good time to buy shares, especially those of American and Japanese multinationals and technology companies on the cutting edge of global growth.

But there is one crucial proviso. However brilliant the economic prospects, there is no point in buying shares if these are already ludicrously overvalued. Investors in Hong Kong have already learnt this lesson the hard way as 1 predicted last year and investors in other emerging markets will suffer similar losses

before this year is out. Indeed, I would repeat and extend my warning of last January — the bear markets in the Far East and Latin America will not be over until shares there have lost at least half of their peak values. Hong Kong has already fallen almost that far, but far worse could still come even there if, as I expect, China descends into a period of political and economic chaos. Ironically, the only really attractive emerging market at the moment ironically seems to be Russia. Especially after the Chechen invasion, the chaos there is fully priced in.

Now, for a more conventional speculative suggestion for bulls. Italy, which I wrongly extolled last year, could come into its own in 1995. Everything depends on a political settlement to clear away the sleazy political old guard which, of course, includes Silvio Berlusconi. If an incorruptible, technocratic government were put in place, the country's outstanding economic prospects would rapidly shine through, especially for equity investors who stand to benefit from the extraordinary competitiveness of the lira.

But what about Wall Street and London? These markets are also said to be overvalued, at least according to many traditional valuation measures. But these measures are based on the assumption that a diversified portfolio of sound equities is riskier than a government bond. If this assumption is false, as I believe it is, then American, British and Japanese equities should prove a good, if unspectacular investment in the year ahead. In the long run, gains can be expected in line with nominal GDP growth of 5 to 6 per cent. But Wall Street could easily enjoy two years' worth of gains, since tax cuts will push

money from bonds to equities, while fears of a "hard landing" in 1996 should soon vanish.

Britain, by contrast, could soon start to suffer from political jitters, as well as from disappointed expectations about Britain's economic miracle. The probability of a Labour victory is said by many analysts to be discounted already. I doubt it.

If investors were focusing seriously on a Labour government, utility shares would by now have been savaged on the stock market. Instead, electricity shares are soaring, water shares have still not given up their enormous post-privatisation gains and even British Gas has almost kept pace with the market, despite the obvious prospect of tighter regulation. This is John Major's incompetence that, in time for the next election, he will manage to give even privatisation a bad name.

That, for now, is my only politico-economic prediction.

The politics of
oil fuels yet
another conflict

John Howell on why the republic of
Chechnya is so important to Russia

Beneath the scenes of bombings and death on the streets of Grozny lies a more prosaic economic story to do with oil: one that goes some way to explaining why the might of Russia has been directed at a tiny mountainous republic. The current conflict is not about past production and transportation, in which Chechnya played a nodal role. Much of that infrastructure has been idle for some time. It is about the potential of the region and the oil fields lying in the Caspian Sea to the east of Grozny, where the oil reserves are estimated at several billion barrels. These fields, described by one oil company as "the oil opportunity of the last quarter of this century", are mainly under the influence of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan and being developed with leading western oil and gas companies.

Throughout 1994, Russia fought to try to secure a continuing stake in the development of these oil fields. Lukoil, the Russian oil producer, and Transneft, the pipeline distribution company, have been playing a strategic game to gain valuable Russian stakes in the production and pipeline initiatives in the region, while the Russia has tried to bring pressure to bear on the choice of where the new pipelines should run.

The problem is not so much in getting the oil out of the ground but in knowing what to do with it when it is out. The existing Russian pipeline network is largely inadequate to cope with the enormous flows predicted. All are agreed that new pipelines should be built. Just where has been a matter of intense geopolitical and international dispute. There are essentially three possible routes, none of

which is politically or economically perfect. The first goes southwest from the Azerbaijani fields and passes through Iran before ploughing across Turkey and on to the port of Ceyhan on the Turkish Mediterranean. The second cuts across from the Azerbaijani fields through Georgia to the Black Sea. The third goes north to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk and would link up with a proposed pipeline from the north Caspian fields.

Last November, Yuri Shafarinik, Russia's Minister of Fuel and Power, reaffirmed Russia's intention to back the northern route, maximising the amount of transportation in Russia (and tariff).

The great problem with this route is that it also passes through Chechnya and the ring of semi-autonomous republics that run along the Northern Caucasus. Independence for these regions would damage Russian influence in these crucial projects, while instability in the region has already raised the levels of nervousness and concern for potential investors.

Despite a direct hit by Russia on the Grozny refinery, Moscow sources confirm that Russian troops have been ordered to prevent further destruction of the energy infrastructure in Chechnya, while hundreds of millions of dollars has been pledged by Russia for rebuilding the energy sector when the conflict ends. Oil and gas were evidently king when Russian troops invaded Chechnya.

Dr John Howell is an international authority on eastern Europe and emerging markets. He is the author of "Understanding Eastern Europe: the context of change".



Coal's great closing down sale

The pits have gone. Now British Coal's land is to go too. Ross Tieman reports

Alone in his vast office, Ray Proctor, the director of privatisation at British Coal, has acquired a temporary air. The mementos of a lifetime in the coal industry — model draglines, dump trucks and coal carvings that adorn the bookcases — seem strangely out of place.

For every day, Hobart House, British Coal's grand head office overlooking the Queen's back garden, becomes more empty as staff clear their desks, collect their redundancy cheques and leave. Even Mr Proctor has only six months more to serve. For those months will be busy. For his is the job of unwinding the complex web of assets and liabilities built up during the state's 48-year ownership of the British coal industry.

With the collieries and opencast pits transferred to new owners for some £950 million in the closing days of

1994, Mr Proctor is now turning over British Coal's entire property portfolio to property agents for disposal.

It looks like the biggest garage sale in history. Over the past half century, British Coal has acquired 110,000 acres of agricultural land. Some was intended for opencast operations. Other acres were bought for burial beneath spoil tips. With agricultural land prices ranging from £400 to £500 an acre in South Wales to £1,000 or even £2,000 an acre in better parts of the East Midlands, this portfolio alone could be worth £70 million.

Some of the 238 tenants who farm this land are keen to buy their holdings. But according to Stephen Dance, the director of property specialists DTZ Debenham Thorpe who is handling the sale for British Coal, there will be other bidders. Some will be investors



Proctor: six months to serve

who will buy land and manage it or sell it piecemeal. Others are likely to be consortia of farmers, including some with neighbouring land, who want to extend their holdings. To meet demand, therefore, he expects to offer the acreage in 12 to 15 regional packages. "The British Coal housing portfolio, ranging from attractive country cottages to derelict houses wrecked by mining subsidence, will probably be offered in half a dozen lots.

Recent sales by the Ministry of Defence of services accommodation has established a good market for houses in batches of around 120, he says. These are then often renovated by their new owners and sold piecemeal, over a prolonged period.

The mixed bag of residual sites, covering 13,000 acres, will be the hardest to sell, or value. For this reason, the vendors will try to switch the onus to potential buyers — regional property developers, such as St Modwen or Evans of Leeds — and cover themselves by including a clawback on development profits.

The most attractive sites are likely to be those of former collieries where large areas, sometimes on the outskirts of towns, are available for industrial or commercial use.

Mr Dance envisages offering three to six packages of properties, to balance redevelopment prospects with some of the most unattractive sites, including contaminated land.

	Year ended 31 December 1994	1993
	£000	£000
Revenue		
Income from rent and sale of property	12,054	9,506
Surplus on realisation of investments and fixed assets	7,769	2,053
Interest earned, gold royalties and income from other sources	832	1,263
Income from investments	1,091	1,203
	21,726	14,025
Expenditure and amounts written off	4,467	5,437
Administration and general	3,658	3,532
Interest paid	809	1,895
Amounts written off investments		10
Profit before tax	17,259	8,588
Tax	4,212	2,642
Profit after tax	13,047	5,946
Unappropriated profit, brought forward	47	13
Less	13,094	5,959
Less	13,055	5,912
Dividends declared	6,135	5,112
Interim 20c (18c)	2,045	1,840
Final 40c (32c)	4,090	3,272
Transfer to reserves	6,900	800
Unappropriated profit, carried forward	59	47
Earnings per share - cents	128	58
Dividends per share - cents	60	50
Times dividends covered	2.1	1.2
Net assets (as valued) per share - cents	1,588	1,427

DECLARATION OF FINAL DIVIDEND

Dividend No. 144 of 40 cents per share, in respect of the year ended 31 December 1994, has been declared in South African currency, payable to members registered at the close of business on 27 January 1995. Warrants payable on 23 February 1995 will be posted to members on 22 February 1995. Non-resident shareholders' tax of 15 per cent will be deducted from the dividend where applicable. The standard conditions relating to the payment of dividends are obtainable from the share transfer offices of the Company. The register of members will be closed from 28 January to 3 February 1995, inclusive.

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S J Dwyer
Secretary

11 January 1995

Rate rises put plans for industrial investment at risk

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

INDUSTRY'S investment plans are being curtailed in the wake of increases in interest rates — and price pressures are rising, which suggests further rate rises to come, according to new survey evidence today from middle-market businesses.

Ministers are awaiting the results later this month from the regular large-scale quarterly business surveys, from organisations such as the Confederation of British Industry and the British Chambers of Commerce, to give a view on the current state of British

industry, and especially the impact of recent increases in interest rates and any signs of that inflationary pressures are mounting.

In advance of that, Lloyds Bank today suggests that while economic recovery is gaining momentum, higher rates have "induced a greater sense of caution" in middle-market business.

In a survey taken last month among 2,000 companies with turnover between £1 million and £100 million, Lloyds said that businesses remained cautious about the prospects for

both investment and jobs — in spite of their highest order books for two years and improvements in confidence, profits and cash flow.

On investment, the survey shows that a balance of 21 per cent of companies — those recording a rise set against those registering a fall — increased their investment in the past six months.

But while this is up from the 19 per cent balance of the previous half-year, companies' forward investment expectations for the first half of 1995 suggest a softening of intentions, with the balance falling back to 15 per cent in the wake of the two rises in interest rates towards the end of last year.

On prices, the bank says there is "some evidence that price pressures are rising", with a balance of 14 per cent of those surveyed reporting a rise in prices. The figure compares with a balance of 12 per cent in the previous six months, and a balance of 2 per cent saying prices had fallen a year ago.

Over the next six months, 19 per cent of businesses expect to raise their prices, but the bank warns that companies' ability to make planned price rises stick is still limited. The picture remains broadly flat with regard to jobs.

Michael Riding, Lloyds Bank commercial service general manager, says it is "worrying" to see the effect the rises in interest rates have had on investment and employment prospects. "The recovery is still fragile and further interest rate rises in 1995 will increase caution among businesses."

Businesses in London are sharply increasing exports as overall growth accelerates — but some are experiencing recruitment difficulties and manufacturers are concerned about rising raw material prices, the London Chamber of Commerce says today.

Sodexho shares dip over acquisition

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN PARIS

SHARES in Sodexho were marked lower in Paris yesterday after the French catering group said it planned to acquire Gardner Merchant for about £750 million.

Forté, the hotels group that owns 24 per cent of Gardner Merchant, has confirmed it is considering the offer, through which it would realise £134 million. Gardner Merchant's current management acquired the business from Forté and had planned to seek a stock market listing in London this year.

The new group will have combined turnover of £21.2 billion and earn operating profit of about £800 million, based on accounts for the period to August 31, 1994.

Sodexho proposes to pay £550 million for the business. Europe's largest contract caterer, and assume £180 million of debt. Sodexho shares were £9 lower at £18.53.

It said the acquisition would be part-financed by a £1.1 billion capital-raising in

which its holding company, Financière Sodexho, would fully subscribe in proportion to its stake. A loan of about £2.2 billion will also help to pay for the acquisition; the rest of the money will come from Sodexho's treasury.

The impact of this operation on the net profit per share of Sodexho will be positive for the year 1995-96," the company said.

Gardner Merchant would keep its autonomy and identity following the purchase, Sodexho said. The board of the British company will be composed of five Gardner Merchant directors, four from Sodexho and three independent directors.

Garry Hawkes, Gardner Merchant's current managing director, will become its chairman and managing director and will be appointed to the Sodexho board. Gardner Merchant's current management will stay in place and retain their responsibilities, Sodexho said.



Roger Holland, chairman of Cray Electronics: strategic alliances with BT and ICL

New products lift Cray profits

By Neil Bennett, Deputy Business Editor

A STREAM of new products and a full contribution from the acquisition of P-E International allowed Cray Electronics, the data communications and software group, to increase profits by 29 per cent in the six months to October 31 to £10.1 million.

Roger Holland, the group's chairman, revealed that it has signed strategic alliances with BT and ICL, the British computer company owned by Fujitsu of Japan, to distribute its data communications prod-

ucts. It has also opened four new sales offices in Europe.

Cray's turnover rose 18 per cent during the half-year to £135 million. Much of the growth came from P-E International, although like-for-like sales at the company's dominant communications division rose 10 per cent to £82.5 million. Earnings per share gained by 20 per cent to 3p, and the interim dividend is being lifted by a third to 1p, payable on February 9.

Profits within the commun-

ications division rose 16 per cent to £7.8 million. Cray is now the largest communications systems provider in Europe, and has started trying to increase its presence in America; during the half year it signed contracts worth \$3.9 million with the Federal Aviation Authority and Digital.

Cray Systems, the software design division, increased profits 58 per cent to £1.9 million.

Temps, page 28

Help for Russia in Scottish Nuclear deal

NUCLEAR power experts from Scotland are to go to Russia to help the industry there under a £1.9 million contract announced by Scottish Nuclear. The company is hoping to win a large share of further work worth a total of £9 million. The initial contract is the first for a new international subsidiary announced today by SN which supplies about half of Scotland's electricity. The subsidiary had been set up to exploit the growing commercial opportunities in the worldwide nuclear industry, said the company.

Under the Russian deal, John Dyan, a senior engineer from SN's Torness power station, will go to Smolensk to head a project team which will carry out plant upgrade work. In addition, George Miller, a planning engineer seconded from SN's Hunterston plant, will be responsible for installing a computer maintenance system. SN's new subsidiary is not just targeting eastern Europe. It is looking for new business around the world, particularly in the Far East.

APTA buys three homes

APTA Healthcare, the newly floated nursing homes company, is acquiring three nursing homes in Lincolnshire for £4.17 million. These add 156 beds, bringing the group's total to 856. The acquisitions, which follow other recent purchases, accompanied results for the half year to October 31 showing taxable profits ahead to £463,000 (£346,000). Shareholders who were paid nothing last time will receive a 0.4p interim dividend on earnings per share increased by 0.1p to 0.5p.

Boardroom coup at B&E

IAN GOWRIE-SMITH, founder and former managing director of Medeva, the drugs group, has become executive chairman of Black & Edgington, supplier of marquees and portable buildings after a boardroom coup. David Gordon, former chairman, and David Fox, finance director, will stay as executive directors, part-time, until June. Mr Gowrie-Smith's family trust and Nigel Wray, chairman of Burford Holdings, have between them taken a 29.76 per cent stake in B&E.

Arcadian to buy hotels

ARCADIAN International, the hotels group, is expanding its portfolio by agreeing to buy two hotels for £10.3 million. The group is planning to raise £13.8 million via a share placing and open offer. Investors are being offered seven new shares for every 12 held at 37p each. The hotels involved are the Haycock, near Peterborough, and the Mollington, Banastre, near Chester. After the acquisition Arcadian will control or operate 15 hotels in Britain and France.

Southern Business falls

SOUTHERN BUSINESS GROUP, the supplier of office equipment was hit by a difficult period for the photocopying industry as pre-tax profits tumbled by £5 million to £7.2 million in the year to September 31. Turnover was down from £57.1 million to £53.3 million. The company continued to reposition agreements to a maximum of five-year terms resulting in a reduction in forward contracted income. The dividend is held at 3.72p on earnings of 5p, down from 8.44p.

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ACCOUNTANCY

Principles are not red herrings

Michael Hughes says that auditors must be valued for objectivity and judgment, not for following rules

I believe that Robert Bruce missed a vital link in his article that described the future of accounting standards — principles versus rules — as a "red herring debate". The audit agenda is crucial to the future of financial reporting but audit and accounting are intertwined in more ways than one. The debate about accounting strikes at the heart of the role of the auditor and will in time affect the rigour and independence of his thinking — which brings us back to the audit agenda.

So what have accounting standards to do with the rigour of the auditor's mind? It is this. Auditors are valued for objectivity and judgment. An increasingly detailed rule book of accounting standards is, therefore, a bad start for developing good auditors. It gives rise to the "where does it say I can't do that" mentality. Some preparers of accounts will point to the rules and ask their auditor where it is said that some questionable treatment cannot be adopted.

And the mentality itself results in demand for even more rules in order to encompass all possible situations — a wholly unachievable objective.

My own profession participates in this: we ask for gaps in the rules to be plugged. But plugging gaps takes time; and more gaps will simply appear. This concentration on more rules is perverse. It is not absence of rules that is the problem, but attitude of mind. To try to resolve it with more detailed rules, just reinforces underlying attitudes. What auditors need is not more rules: it is good training and judgment and an independent mind.

There are many auditors who continue to take stands against improper accounting regardless of the rules. They are, rightly, contemptuous of the "where does it say I can't do that" question. But their lives become more difficult as the rule book expands. They have to force clients to apply these rules even where they do not regard them as relevant or appropriate. The focus on compliance reduces time for judgment. Directors increasingly, therefore, see auditors as rule-driven animals, rather than independent-minded individuals whose judgment is worth heeding. And increasingly our new blood is brought up learning the detailed rules, with less and less time — or



Michael Hughes wants heavier penalties for miscreants

indeed scope — to learn the appropriate use of judgment.

UK standard-setting arrangements have been in place for almost four years. This is therefore an appropriate time to consider the future regime we want. Do we wish to follow a prescriptive route or develop

principles that allow greater use of judgment applied to specific circumstances? As Robert Bruce identified, the \$64,000 question is whether the preparers of accounts and their auditors can be trusted to apply good judgment. It is important that we focus on the

mechanisms that will achieve this goal. Here is a first shot:

□ The way in which we train and educate our new auditors must alter. We must get away from rule-driven training and focus on developing independence of mind, stressing importance of proper judgment.

□ Audit firms' internal review processes which monitor audit quality must be focused on the quality of judgment of individual partners and their independence of mind.

□ Audit firms are reviewed by their regulator. The regulator's programme must develop beyond a compliance and check list-based methodology towards assessing the judgment and independence of individuals whom it regulates as auditors, and the internal processes of the firms in this area.

□ There must be a tougher regime towards those who get it wrong. The present regime — both audit regulation and financial reporting regulation through the Financial Reporting Review Panel — is too much rule-driven. Have you complied or have you not? This is, of course, easy territory — one is either guilty or not of breaking a rule. But it ignores the far more difficult area of proper judgment. It must be extended into this area with serious penalties for those found wanting.

The author is chairman of KPMG's accounting committee

Coopers ought to take it on the chin

IF YOU had fancied a bet on the outcome of a court judgment, you would have got pretty long odds on the profession's disciplinary body winning against Coopers & Lybrand. It is a shame no odds were offered. Astute souls who bet on the unfashionable idea that the regulators should defeat one of the largest accounting firms would have cleaned up.

After the debacle of Price Waterhouse stopping the JDS, the profession's joint disciplinary body, from investigating its auditing of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) either before or during the other court cases it faces over the bank's collapse, the Coopers case had been expected to go the same way. After all, it was a similar corporate collapse with a similar high profile — in this case Coopers' auditing of the Maxwell pension funds.

However, when the full judgment arrived, somewhat unexpectedly just before Christmas, it was clear on the Price Waterhouse comparison and remarkably frank about the scale of the case against the partners at Coopers who carried out the Maxwell audit.

First the Price Waterhouse case. The judgment included a specific schedule covering this. Lord Justice Henry and Mr Justice Kay drew a distinction between the "open-ended nature" of the BCCI inquiry and the Maxwell case.

In the BCCI case "there was no allegation of misconduct", whereas in the Maxwell case "serious allegations are made". The BCCI case "might destroy the appellants' business". However, in the Maxwell case "there is no evidence that the litigation poses that threat".

The schedule concludes: "In short, the court took the view that, on its facts, there was little public interest in the pursuit of the disciplinary proceedings, and a real risk of serious prejudice to the civil proceedings were they not stayed, and we, on our facts, took a diametrically opposite view to theirs on each side of the balance."

That disposes neatly of the Price Waterhouse parallels, which was important because at least three other firms facing disciplinary inquiries were waiting for the Coopers result before having a go themselves at gagging the profession's own efforts to discover whether their auditing had been up to snuff or not.

However, the real importance of this

judgment is that it thunderously emphasises the importance of the ability of the JDS to investigate promptly and effectively. And it underlines the seriousness of the Maxwell affair for Coopers and its partners. There had been real concern that the profession was being rendered impotent to deal with alleged miscreants within its ranks.

After the Price Waterhouse judgment, there were obvious fears that the profession would find its critics on one side baying for justice to be seen to be done in public-interest cases. And on the other side, the firms under investigation would be investing heavily in lawyers and ensuring that the JDS could not investigate anything until decades after the events had happened.

This judgment should put an end to that. "And where there is public concern," it stated, "there is an obvious need for that concern to be met with all speed consistent with justice. If the disciplinary proceedings designed to address that concern are stayed pending resolution of the civil proceedings, we are doubtful whether that public concern will often be met when it has to await prior resolution of those civil proceedings."

The revelations about the investigation itself are breathtaking. Coopers had said in its original affidavit that it faced "potential civil claims amounting approximately to a sum of £411 million (ignoring interest and costs)" and that the inquiry would "impose intolerable strains on the few individuals within Coopers who were actually involved in the relevant audits".

The judgment dismisses such famous nonsense with all the ease of a well-timed cover drive. "Given the nature of the allegations against them, we accept without hesitation the strains that are on them," the judgment states. "But these strains must be greatly reduced by the fact that they have the support of their employers (and of their considerable resources) in all of this."

Coopers has until the middle of next month to decide whether to appeal against the decision. But it is clear from the judgment that the best thing it could do would be to allow the profession to investigate its auditing of the Maxwell pension funds, and to accept any punishment if it has transgressed. That would be the professional approach. Far better than trying to weasel it out, abetted by lawyers.



ROBERT BRUCE

Publish and be damned

LAST week's conference of the English ICA council was behind closed doors. And if some council members had got their way, much of the business would have stayed there. In particular the excellent report on the future of regulation by a working party led by Chris Swinson of Stoy Hayward. This recommends setting up an independent body to deal with public interest cases and washes some dirty linen in public. One

section says that "if members' unhappiness grows, the ICA will become increasingly difficult to manage". The council, which has rather too many elderly and retired folk, was against publishing. It was only at the insistence of Roger Lawson, the president, that it saw the light of day.

Getting of wisdom

EVEN so, Chris Swinson came in for much flak. "Wis-

dom is not the purchase of the day," he quoted at his fellow council members. And was rather surprised at people bellowing at him about quoting mottoes out of his Letts diary. Given the council finally only agreed to setting up further working parties to consider the matter over the coming year, Swinson might have been tempted to sling another quotation back at them: "Be wise today; 'tis madness to defer."

Area rep

THIS year's Hogmanay was the first in 20-plus years when members of the Scots Institute working in England and Wales did not have the legendary John Scanders at their helm. He retired as secretary of the ICAS England and Wales Area at the end of December. But he will long treasure the comment a couple of years back from Lord Mackay of Clashfern,

the Lord Chancellor, at the annual London dinner. "Only the Scots would have the audacity to describe England and Wales as 'an area'."

Signing off

DAVID CARTER is retiring as head of KPMG's forensic accounting in March. But it has been a job well done. In the past four years he has been involved in "over £250 million of satisfactory judgments and settlements", he says. Time for pipe and slippers.

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FOCUS

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

Simon Tait finds Jeremy Isaacs bloodied but unbowed by recent storms at the Royal Opera House — and positive about the future

Last year's controversial ROH *Rheingold*. Jeremy Isaacs has set out to enliven the range

A Garden in bloom

Jeremy Isaacs likens himself to Sisyphus, the Corinthian king condemned to spend eternity rolling a boulder uphill. "How- ever well we do in one year," he says, "the next year is always the most difficult we have to face."

He has been general director of the Royal Opera House for six years, and in each one it has been an uphill struggle to maintain a high-quality artistic programme against funding crises, artistic criticism, or the physical decay of the outdated old building which is the showcase for both our finest opera and ballet.

"I still believe that the right strategy for a great house like this is to err marginally on the side of ambition," he says. The criticism of Baroness Warnock in her Arts Council-commissioned report two years ago, which attacked the Covent Garden management and condemned it for pressing ahead with the £150 million development scheme without identifying all the funding, still galls.

"The more I think about Warnock the more misguided a document I think it was," says Mr Isaacs. "She assumed that somehow we could go back to ten years ago when everything seemed to be all right and there were no financial problems, but what she didn't understand is that the art level of those years was so deplorably inert that something drastic had to be done about it. I was that something drastic. I came in here with a brief to enliven the range of our work."

He has never questioned the importance of this egalitarian age, of a nationally funded opera and dance

house, nor the appropriateness of a subsidy of £9.5 million, the biggest single grant the Arts Council gives — albeit for three companies, the Royal Ballet, Royal Opera and Birmingham Royal Ballet — which he believes is short by about £1 million.

The present Royal Opera House was built in 1858, and remains virtually unchanged. "Every other great city in Europe has rebuilt its opera houses since the war, but we have not," says Mr Isaacs. "It is a national shame."

London is a world centre for music. "Opera and ballet are the two great performance art forms, millions of people love them, we're very good at them. This house exists to present them with British skills behind them, but on an international level," Mr Isaacs says.

There is nothing whatever elitist about it, he insists, and one of his three great regrets is the need to have the seat prices as high as they are to compensate for the subsidy shortfall. There are 2,000 seats in this house; 850 of them are reasonably priced and the opera has been full pretty well every night this season," he says. "I think that's a tribute to the appeal for what we're offering."

The major financial confrontation



Jeremy Isaacs: hopeful

with the Arts Council came when the Covent Garden board decided that to preserve its artistic programme it would have to budget for a deficit in 1991. This meant deliberately increasing a debt of £3.3 million by £2 million, anathema to the Government, and both the Arts Council and the Government denounced the decision as "provocative". A compromise was found.

The second chief regret, he says, is using the word Armageddon four years ago to describe what would happen if he didn't get his Arts Council grant restored. Some took him to be referring to the bloody battle that would ensue. "What I really meant to say was that we would have to savage our programme, which indeed we did."

Nevertheless, he saved the artistic credit of the house, not always to critical acclaim — the cries of "Isaacs, this is rubbish" which greeted the production of *Les Huguenots* two seasons ago still ring in his ears — but to general satisfaction. Mr Isaacs produces a letter he recently received from someone unknown to him, who has been a Covent Garden habitué since 1958. The place, he wrote, had been transformed: "The repertoire has been widened, there is no excessive

reliance on big names to the detriment of other essential elements, and there is an excitement about the place that was missing for so many years."

His third compunction is that ballet has had to suffer because opera brings more money through the box office. "Ballet suffered disgracefully from this and as soon as we see the chance we want to reverse the policy."

Changes in the financial management of the opera house have contributed to the reduction of its debt from £3.6 million to £1.4 million over three years, and the pledge to clear it by March 1996 will, Mr Isaacs hopes, be met early.

But the future security of the Royal Opera House lies, he believes, with the development plan that will create a brand new theatre around the old house. Technically the ROH is in the Stone Age, and the new development will transform it from labour intensive to capital intensive, saving millions more. So on January 4 the Royal Opera House delivered its bid for £50 million for the scheme from the Arts Council's lottery fund — the rest will come from donations already promised, and from the realisation of retail units on the redeveloped site. "If we didn't get it, it would certainly mean the abandonment of the major scheme," says Mr Isaacs.

A brand new opera house would cost about £300 million. "The nation has to face up to the question, does it want a great opera house? I think our scheme would be a bargain, and money well spent."

Schools break down the barriers

Covent Garden and groups of boisterous children are working hard to dispel the myth of elitism

Chris Lowe, headteacher of a Peterborough comprehensive, has noticed a curious omission in the Royal Opera House's charter, *Simon Tait writes*. "There is no mention," he says, "of the place being about entertainment. It says the purpose of the Royal Opera House is educational."

This might go some way to

explaining why the place is seen as forbidding, somewhere to go for a difficult evening of mind improvement, the venue for performances which are "inaccessible".

At meetings of the ROH board of directors, accessibility is the single most discussed subject — more than programming, artistic standards, even funding. Mr Lowe, who is also a board member, believes the

accusation of elitism so often thrown at the Royal Opera House is due to a self-perpetuating misconception. "I cannot think of a single opera house in the world that has done as much to make it possible for everyone to go who wants to go, with prices ranging from £2 up to... whatever the top is, I honestly don't know." (For opera it is £133.50, for ballet £58.50.)

As a board member, Mr Lowe's special interest is Covent Garden's education programme. For half a dozen afternoons a year, the theatre is given over to children's matinees of both opera and ballet and, he says, these are oversubscribed sometimes by four or five times.

I went to see the Royal Ballet perform Frederick Ashton's *The Dream*, starring Lesley Collier and William Trevitt, for 2,000 children between the ages of seven and 12, from as far afield as Cornwall, Northumberland and Wales.

The revered place was unbuttoned for the excited youngsters, who had no more awe for the surroundings than for their own school halls. But there was total absorption, for boys as much as girls, with what was happening on stage.

For Darryl Jaffray, head of ballet education at the Garden and a former Royal Ballet dancer, the matinees are the linchpin of the £100,000-plus education programme. "It is such a joy to see the house like this that it is difficult not to spend the whole afternoon looking at the auditorium instead of at the stage," she said.

The ROH's education department was begun in 1983 by Pauline Tambling with a staff of two. Ms Tambling is now, as head of opera education, in joint charge with Ms Jaffray, and there is a staff of six. These include a fund raiser, for 30 per cent of the costs have to come from sponsorship. Four years ago there was an outcry when a single matinee was cancelled by Jeremy Isaacs because of lack of funding. It has never happened since, although it has been close.

The operation involves not simply putting on special schools' performances, but going to the schools with singers, dancers, choreographers, musicians, directors and designers for demonstrations and workshops.

At the Garden there are week-long workshops, teachers' training sessions, and Saturday Specials — low price performances for low income groups — several times a year, as well as study days, discussion evenings and even sing-alongs. There are also special outreach projects: this month

Ms Tambling has organised a two-week programme with Salford secondary schools around the theme of February's production of *La Bohème*, from which will come the schools' own opera projects. The £50,000 costs have been raised through the local authority, the Friends of Covent Garden and Salford business sponsors.

The education department has established a database of about 8,000 schools — about a quarter of all schools — which they know to be interested, and this number is growing all the time.

For next season the board is expected to agree to keep back a block of 30-50 seats, at a cost of not more than £10 each, for 20 or 30 performances a year for young people who cannot come to the matinees.

Pricing of seats at the Garden has been the most contentious of issues. Keith Cooper, head of corporate affairs, has to dispel the impression of £200-a-head seats being the norm. In fact, he explains, there are 26 different price schedules, with 113 different seat prices, which take into account special incentive schemes, low-cost performances, the educational initiatives and broadcasting. The average price paid for seats this season is £64 for opera and £31 for ballet, a far cry from the top price for Pavarotti.

Broadcasting is becoming an increasingly promising access point for opera and ballet with, according to Mike Morris, the new head of personnel, a new trade union attitude.

"BECTU, the technical union, has particularly taken on board the need to be able to make use of television and video. There appears to have been a sea change in the Musicians' Union too, and this is going to make all the difference."

Last November Michael Jackson, controller of BBC2, was at the opening night of the new production of *La traviata*, and was so smitten by it that he cleared his schedule a fortnight later to televise a performance live. This, says Mr Cooper, is symptomatic of a growing enthusiasm among broadcasters. That one night's broadcast added an audience of well over 1.6 million to the 16,000 who will have been able to attend the eight performances.

More broadcasts are planned, and there is to be further use of the expensive but highly popular big-screen relays into Covent Garden Piazza. There is also a growing number of productions being recorded on video.

"Many people do not enjoy opera or ballet," a Royal Opera House educational video made for potential sponsors announces. "They have never had the chance. It's a shame. It's a challenge."



South London pupils work on a project organised by the ROH education department

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Something to sing about

Running something like the Royal Opera must be one of the trickiest tasks known to man. It is *sui generis* an establishment organisation, a flagship of national culture with all that that implies. Yet who wants to be in charge of a theatre museum?

The very height of its profile presupposes constant criticism, not only from consumers who are more demanding and pickier than those for any other art form, but also from people who have never been to the opera in their lives but can see public money disappearing down a huge black hole. The general director of the ROH must have a full-time job simply answering (or at least signing) letters of complaint and countering ill-informed media comment.

The current general director, Jeremy Isaacs, took up the job in 1988. He came, of course, from the world of television, and broke an unofficial apostolic succession that had been in place since the opera company in its present form was established in 1946.

He had a rough ride in his first few years, being subjected to an anonymous whispering campaign whose origins were hard to pin down, but one that stopped as suddenly as it had started. It centred largely on his supposed arrogance — he is the least arrogant man in the world — and, (surprise, surprise) on his lack of experience, a lack that he turned into an advantage by declining to tread traditional paths. And he has that one essential quality vital in anyone concerned with opera, passion. No museum curator he.

Now that he has got his team in place — Nicholas Payne, one of the shrewdest minds in the business, was appointed opera director two years ago — his cumbersome flagship is sailing serenely, for the time being at least, through the treacherous waters of international opera.

Artistically, its standing is high compared with its European peers. Paris, for instance, is still in chaos, and is held up mistakenly as an example of the dangers of unlimited public funding, whereas in reality the chaos stems from interference by politicians: never can there have been a clearer demonstration of the advantages of Britain's "arm's-length" system.

La Scala, Milan, is a sort of operatic "safe house", solid but unchallenging; the Vienna State Opera appears to be

If there were ever a case for national pride, the Royal Opera is it. Rodney Milnes explains his admiration



La traviata so impressed BBC's boss that he cleared his schedules to show it live

moribund; following the collapse of the wall, politics rule in Berlin, where the new, extravagantly funded State Opera could turn into the sort of vibrantly alive organisation that we have here. The Bavarian State Opera, under new, English management (Peter Jonas), is also being shaken up.

Comparisons with houses in the US, where opera is basically a privately-funded affair, are not strictly applicable, but the Met is not as antediluvian as it is made out to be, and there are lively organisations

in Chicago and San Francisco. But the Royal Opera can hold its head high as one of the healthiest operatic organisations in the world today.

Its health stems from its insistence on the paramountcy of musical values, a long tradition in Bow Street. With one of the world's most respected musicians, Bernard Haitink, as music director, Edward Downes as his associate and recent guests of the calibre of Sir Georg Solti, Valery Gergiev, Claudio Abbado and Colin Davis, you cannot go far wrong.

Then there is the carefully devised mix of repertory. Of course you have to have the basic ABC — *Aida*, *Bohème* and *Carmen* — but the Royal Opera has leavened this with some surprising rarities: the "lost" Verdi masterpiece, *Stiffelio*, Massenet's virtually unknown *Chérubin*, both big artistic successes, and the curious but enormously popular *Pastorale*. Rossini's *Mosè* and Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* are not exactly mainstays of the repertory, but they have been given in solidly satisfying productions. Failures — let's

not name them, for once — have been few and far between.

Some felt last year's new *Meistersinger* was too solid, others found it delightfully fresh; the only thing that everyone can agree on is that the first instalments of the new Ring — *Rheingold* and *Walküre* — two months ago were the sort of thing opera buffs will be arguing about for years to come. Quite rightly, the management will have no truck with a "house style": the sheer variety of the work put on stage is one of the house's greatest current strengths.

And, most difficult of all, it keeps its end up with 20th-century opera, the magnificent *Kaya Kabanova*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Death in Venice*, Prokofiev's *Fiery Angel*, and the house's very own *Gawain*. The management could have saved a lot of money by cancelling the revival of Britten's epic, but it is the measure of Isaacs's passion that he dug his toes in and went ahead — and was rewarded with good box-office.

One or two clouds remain on the horizon. The Royal Opera's artistic standing may be high, but it produces such fine work with about a third less of the funding enjoyed by its European counterparts. To keep going, it has had to put up seat prices to what many regard as socially unacceptable levels, limiting the spread of its potential audience.

At the same time, it receives the largest slug of public money of any of the Arts Council's clients, thereby drawing resentful comment as the most generously supported arts organisation in the land, and at the same time one of the least accessible to the general public. This is a nettle that someone, somewhere must grasp sooner or later.

And there is the question of the long overdue redevelopment. Where will the company be performing in three years' time? Will it actually get the money, and if so, from where? The sort of excellent work currently being put on is one thing, the fact that the theatre is practically falling down quite another, and there's something awfully "English" about it. We don't go in for national pride, but I wish we did, especially when we've got something to be proud about. That's another nettle to be grasped.

A scheme in tune with the 21st century

Plans are afoot to redevelop, refurbish and extend Covent Garden



Artist's impression of the redeveloped Opera House

ON JANUARY 4 a bulky envelope arrived, hand delivered, to Peter, Guttmann, chairman of the Arts Council's National Lottery board. It contained the key to the Royal Opera House's future, perhaps even to its survival: a bid for more than £50 million to ensure the Covent Garden development plan is realised.

No potential National Lottery capital scheme has received such publicity, none has been so long on the drawing board or so often returned to it, none is likely to be so detailed in its design or its funding strategy. In broad terms, the scheme will redevelop, restore, refurbish and extend the Royal Opera House, and make it viable for the 21st century. To the ROH Board, chaired by Sir Angus Stirling, it is simply essential. The Covent Garden development stretches back almost two decades to when the first Arts Minister, Jennie Lee, and the Government bought the site the theatre stands on "to preserve and use it for the improvement, enlargement and efficient running of the Royal Opera House", and transferred it to the opera house's new charitable trust in 1981.

The £50 million development will give a home to the Royal Ballet in Covent Garden for the first time; create a second auditorium of about 500 seats in addition to the 2,000 seats of the existing auditorium (which is to be upgraded and its sight-lines improved); give disabled access to all parts of the theatre; end the "apartheid" which physically kept apart the audience of the amphitheatre levels from those of the lower house; provide studio space

for community and educational activities; and, with the installation of air conditioning for the first time, an end to the "Black Hole of Calcutta experience", as Jeremy Isaacs, general director of the ROH, calls the high summer atmosphere in the theatre.

Ten years ago, Jeremy Dixon and Edward Jones, with the Building Design Partnership, were commissioned to devise a scheme which would transform the 1833 listed building without recourse to public funding and depending entirely on public appeal and the capital income from office and commercial developments. Planning permission was given in 1990, but cost estimates rose to £250 million.

BUT with the recession getting a grip, the commercial potential was looking increasingly uncertain. Stuart Lipton and Stanhope Properties was commissioned to review the whole project, and recommended drastic changes. If office space was removed from the scheme, there would be space for street-level storage obviating the expensive and possibly damaging deep cellars. The whole scheme could then move forward more swiftly and cheaply, with less disruption to the local community. The Covent Garden Community Association had been a persistent critic of the scheme, but was now consulted. If Lottery money could be obtained, matching money could be raised by public appeal and another £50 million from retail developments.

The board concurred and a new scheme was drawn up, within the original framework, retaining more of the Floral Hall and providing better backstage working conditions. The regime for stage hands today is back-breaking, with Victorian technology to go with the Victorian building but plans would allow sets to be stored and moved mechanically.

It will, of course, mean the house closing for two years in 1997, and siting the ballet and opera seasons elsewhere. Several options are under consideration, including the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, the Coliseum and the near-derelict Lyceum.

Mr Isaacs said: "I know that we are working a miracle here but that it is the customer who is bearing the brunt. They deserve something better — and we are determined to provide it."

SIMON TAIT

Terry Eccles on the changing fortunes and faces of Covent Garden over the last 200 years

The square that Inigo built

Theatre, opera and ballet have been associated with Covent Garden for over 200 years, but the place has also seen older vocations and professions. The name itself is a corruption of convent, a linguistic relic of the original landlord, Westminster Abbey, which held the lands until the dissolution of the monasteries.

Thereafter, ownership was granted to the earls of Bedford, the 4th of whom hoped to enhance the family fortune by building a square of elegant houses fetching appropriately fashionable rents.

The plan, by Inigo Jones, was distinctly continental: a piazza of tall terraced houses above arcaded pavements with, on the west side, the Italianate St Paul's church

(where George Bernard Shaw's flower-seller Eliza Doolittle would later shelter).

When the new square was completed in 1639, it quickly became one of the most fashionable addresses in London. The lustre gradually wore away, however, as the well-to-do moved nearer to the court at St James's and the first hucksters' stalls — the origins of Covent Garden market — began to appear. The atmosphere changed. Commerce generated a greater diversity of trades and customers. New coffee houses sprang up, patronised by the leading figures of the day: Fielding, Boswell, Pope, Sheridan and Garrick. By the mid-18th century the fine residences had declined into disreputable lodging



The fire at Covent Garden Theatre on March 5, 1856, site of the current opera house

houses, Turkish baths and brothels.

Around the same time, the actor-manager John Rich built the first Covent Garden theatre, and on December 7, 1732, his Theatre Royal at Covent Garden opened with a performance of Congreve's *The Way of the World*. For the first hundred years of its history the Covent Garden theatre was principally a playhouse. Rich himself was a celebrated harlequin and promoted the development of pantomime which survived as a Christmas tradition at Covent Garden until the 1930s.

Serious music was presented even from the earliest years, however. From 1735 until his death, Handel performed there, wrote many of his operas and oratorios for the theatre and finally bequeathed it his organ. It and many of his manuscripts perished in the fire that destroyed the theatre in 1808. By the end of the following year, a second theatre opened, perhaps ominously, with a performance of *Macbeth*. Very soon, the management's attempt to recoup the building costs by raising seat prices succeeded only in sparking the second audience riots in the theatre's history.

Although ballet and opera did feature — *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro* and

The Barber of Seville had their first performances in English there — the programme at Covent Garden, as elsewhere, had to be varied to be popular. Bravura renditions of extracts from the classics might be followed by acrobatics or some other crowd-pleasing spectacle. But in 1846 a dispute at the main ballet and opera stage, Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket, resulted in the almost complete defection of its company to Covent Garden. With the auditorium remodelled, the theatre reopened as the Royal Italian Opera and was later to present the English premieres of Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *Il trovatore*.

In 1856, however, the building was once again razed to the ground. The third theatre, designed by E.M. Barry and opened in 1858, has managed to survive and, in recent years, even expand on its cramped site. At the time of its reopening, however, the flower and vegetable market was thriving around it. It employed a thousand porters, but as Dickens wrote in *Sketches by Boz*: "This is essentially a theatrical neighbourhood... The errand boys and chandler's shopkeepers' sons are all stage-struck." He knew them well. Dickens kept rooms nearby

and, aged 19, had offered himself as a talent for the Covent Garden stage.

By 1892, in recognition of the French and German works now in the repertory, the theatre's name was changed to the Royal Opera House. Seasons of opera and ballet were presented winter and summer with the theatre dark in between or even offering films, cabarets, lectures and dances. It was only after the Second World War that the present opera and ballet companies were established. (During the war the House had been used as a Mecca dance hall, and as a government furniture store between 1946 and 1953). In February 1946, Ninette de Valois's Sadler's Wells Ballet reopened the Opera House with a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, and in December shared the production of *The Fairy Queen* with its fellow resident, the newly forged opera company.

Today the Royal Opera House is also the London home of the Birmingham Royal Ballet, and is regularly host to international performers and companies. And, while the market traders moved away long ago, outdoor screenings of live performances ensure that stage-struck fans are still out there on the Covent Garden cobbles.

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Dancing out of trouble

Allen Robertson on how the two companies of the Royal Ballet have found renewed vigour in the 1990s

Accommodation and compromise have been bywords of the two companies now known as the Royal Ballet and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Yet each in its own way has managed to triumph over adversity. One reason why this bipartite arrangement is so successful is that the two companies are the same, yet different.

Since taking up residence in Birmingham in 1990, that troupe, under the artistic direction of Peter Wright, has put special emphasis on reviving many mid 20th-century masterworks from Europe and America. The Covent Garden company, run by Anthony Dowell, has focused on new stagings of the great full-length Russian classics which first helped to establish the British ballet's worldwide reputation. This approach gives dance fans a breadth and depth of choice few other companies could match.

Yet the two companies have had to cope with conditions and performance schedules which older, more established, troupes would scoff at.

The Russian Imperial Company in St Petersburg (now the Kirov Ballet) was established in 1738, and the Paris Opéra Ballet in 1669. Even the specialised Royal Danish Ballet has been going for well over 150 years. By contrast, Britain's national ballet started only in 1931.

The company's early promise developed during its initial years at Sadler's Wells Theatre, took a huge leap forward when it was invited to take up residence at Covent Garden at the end of the Second World War. This move led to a golden age for British ballet. Margot Fonteyn, the muse for choreographer Frederick Ashton,

became the epitome of the lyric, graceful, dramatic, yet purposefully understated approach which came to be known as the "English style". Another company ballerina, Moira Shearer, rocketed to international stardom thanks to the film *The Red Shoes*; and, as the Forties became the Fifties, a group of young choreographic talents such as Kenneth MacMillan, John Cranko and Wright began to emerge.

Then, in an unexpected coup Rudolf Nureyev arrived in London just as the Swinging Sixties were starting to make an impact. Suddenly, ballet was a hot ticket — people were queuing overnight at the box office. Nor was it just the legendary

Ballet fans enjoy a depth of choice few companies could match

Fonteyn-Nureyev duo creating the stir. Young artists such as Lynn Seymour, Antoinette Sibley, Dowell, Christopher Gable and Monica Mason were also making their mark.

But it is the nature of any arts organisation always to be in flux. By the late 1970s, the golden era was drawing to a close. Purdits spent much of the Thatcher years bemoaning declining standards and a lack of vision. A turning point came in 1986 when Dowell took over at Covent Garden. Since then he has nurtured a shining new generation of talent led by the likes of Viviana Durante and Doreen Bussell. Irak Mukhamedov, the Russian superstar, has become a company member and Sylvie Guillem, the French ballerina, surely the best-known woman in dance, is a long-term, virtually permanent guest artist. Such an abundance of talent has put the Royal Ballet on top yet again.

Of course, nothing is perfect. Thanks to economic pres-



The Dream with William Trevitt and Viviana Durante — a shining new generation

ures over the past few seasons the company has been forced to reduce its repertoire. Pragmatically, the ballet has ceded performance dates to the opera. After all, top tickets for the opera are more than twice as expensive as for dance. Economics therefore dictates that the singers get first call on the space.

For several seasons Jeremy Isaacs, ROH general director, has been making noises about getting the ballet company back to parity. It will be interesting to see what develops. When Covent Garden closes for renovations the ballet company will have to take up residence in that non-existent phantom known as "the London dance house". If

such a venue is not made available, then the Royal Ballet will become nomads circling the globe and landing wherever someone offers a guest engagement.

By contrast, Birmingham Royal Ballet is used to a life on the road. In the years leading up to its transfer to the Midlands, Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet (as it was then called) had several productions in its repertoire which could not fit on the small stage at the Wells. They could only be performed on tour.

When Birmingham offered a firm, expanded base of operations to see nothing of a ten-week home season), Wright and the Opera House jumped at the chance. Not only did the city fathers renovate the Hippodrome with a

new stage equivalent in size to Covent Garden, they also built large, ultra-modern backstage and rehearsal facilities. These make what is available in London a Dickensian nightmare in comparison.

Almost immediately, Wright eradicated the doom-sayers' predictions that a move to Birmingham would marginalise the company. His vision and enthusiastic tenure, which led to his knighthood, is drawing to a close next summer, but Sir Peter leaves in the knowledge that his thriving company will be in the capable hands of choreographer David Bintley, his chosen successor.

Bintley says his goal is to turn Birmingham Royal Ballet into a company second to none. He just might succeed.

Simon Tait on a change in the Opera House fortunes

The art of selling tickets twice

Two years ago the Royal Opera House was criticised for its financial management — by not one, but two separate reports. The solution it came up with seems like pantomime arithmetic: sell 102 per cent of seats as often as possible.

It can be done and it has been — most recently with the highly controversial Richard Jones *Rheingold* production. After critical reviews, some bookings were cancelled. When this happens, 90 per cent of the ticket price is returned with 10 per cent retained as a handling fee and the seat is sold again. When the house is full, as with *Rheingold*, the resold seats can push the box office income up to the value of 30 or 40 more seats than there are in the house.

"The key is to ensure that we sell every seat in the house," Clive Timms, the finance director, says. "That means careful programming and ticket pricing, but it is the central policy." Overall, the house was 87 per cent full last season.

In mid-1992, the ROH had a deficit which threatened to top £5 million. This was highlighted in the reports from Baroness Warnock, commissioned by the Arts Council, and from Price Waterhouse, commissioned by the ROH board.

Savings had to be made — while preserving artistic integrity — at a time of declining subsidy and with sponsorship threatened by the recession. Box office, too, was hit by the recession, but the first option was bringing in optimum income through ticket sales.

Mr Timms, the former financial director of ITN, came in to bring about the changes, which led to his knighthood, is drawing to a close next summer, but Sir Peter leaves in the knowledge that his thriving company will be in the capable hands of choreographer David Bintley, his chosen successor.

Bintley says his goal is to turn Birmingham Royal Ballet into a company second to none. He just might succeed.



Clive Timms: "progress"

from sponsorship and fund raising.

"We have to look at ways of improving on that income — and we're not looking at increasing prices but ensuring we don't have any empty seats," Mr Timms says. But the task of "putting our house in order", as the ROH describes it, is more complicated than simply narrowing the ratio of bumps to seats.

Running an opera house is labour-intensive, with 50 per cent of income going on the payroll.

"This art is about people performing and we're looking at ways of using our people more efficiently," Mr Timms says. "Costs can run out of control quite easily in the pursuit of artistic excellence. Spending decisions have to be taken almost instantaneously. It's what makes the work fresh and vibrant and different, but there is a cost."

There have already been redundancies and pay was frozen for a year. Working practices have had to change, and this has meant hard union

negotiations. "In the maintenance area, for example, it means looking at what work is done in-house and what is contracted," Mr Timms says.

Artists' work practices, too, are under scrutiny, with the system of rehearsal calling, which can mean performers waiting for hours before starting work, being examined. Directors are being asked to examine the numbers of non-singing actors and the size of choruses.

They will also balance the importance of one production against another in terms of artistic merit, and weigh up box office potential against cost — a revival of Borodin's *Prince Igor* has been lost in this analysis.

The opera house is not a normal business organisation. Its 900-plus personnel keep the operation going 24 hours a day and seven days a week. "You try to adjust," Mr Timms says, "and at the same time try to make sure that you don't reduce the earnings of employees."

Their support is essential. After a warning in May last year that there might be no pay rise because of the tightness of the budget, things looked up enough for an offer of a 2.3 per cent across-the-board increase to be put on the table.

"From the outside, the artistic process is quite inefficient," Mr Timms says. "Warnock and Price Waterhouse did good work, but the best way of getting managers to change is for them to think of the ideas themselves. That means feeding them information so they can see what's going wrong, identify why and then let them improve, and that's where we've made real progress."

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2001: a Verdi odyssey

The Verdi anniversary is a great excuse for a festival

Giuseppe Verdi was one of the most prolific composers of opera, and remains one of the most performed. The taste for his monumental themes couched in stirring, popular tunes remains unabated. In the next seven years to the centenary of his death in 2001, the Royal Opera is presenting all 28 of Verdi's operas. Sir Edward Downes, the Royal Opera's assistant music director, claims that it will be the first significant Verdi festival to have been held anywhere.

The idea emerged almost three years ago when Sir Edward and Paul Findlay, who was then Covent Garden's director of opera, discussed scheduling more Verdi at the end of the main season, when audiences usually begin to drift away. Mr Findlay then said to Sir Edward: "Why not do all of Verdi?" Doubts on the Opera House board were removed by the huge popular success of Verdi's *Attila* and *Stiffelio* at the Garden, and the idea took hold.

Such an ambitious scheme inevitably raised daunting logistical problems. Taking the 2001 centenary as the concluding year determined a pattern of four operas a year. Verdi, particularly early in his career, had been a highly practical musician, composing according to the tastes and vocal resources of the companies that commissioned him.

Because of this and because of the availability today of the best and most suitable leading singers, and the schedule's demands on chorus and orchestra, as well as for reasons of musical interest, a straightforward chronological sequence was ruled out. But, as Sir Edward says: "In opera, you cut your coat according to your cloth."

Sir Edward has had the awesome task of marshalling these unruly forces into a whole satisfying to the public and the Verdi specialist alike. Different themes in the oeuvre — Verdi in London, the influence of Byron, the Adriatic and Ligurian Sea — will be fleshed out each year in a programme of new productions, co-productions and revivals.

This, the first year, will see



Giuseppe Verdi with Victor Maurel as Iago in *Otello*

Sir Edward again conducting *Stiffelio*, Bernard Haitink, the music director, will conduct *Simon Boccanegra*, Sir Georg Solti *La traviata* and Daniele Gatti *I due Foscari*, with further performances of *Un ballo in maschera*. Collaborations are planned with other British and foreign companies, including the Welsh National Opera, Rome Opera and the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Juxtaposed with the fully staged productions at Covent Garden, selected Verdi revisions and reworkings can be heard in concert performances on the South Bank and elsewhere.

That there is a serious academic intent behind the festival is borne out by the existence of the specially convened Verdi Festival Consultative Committee, which comprises leading Verdians from around the world. Experts and practitioners will give lectures, play-readings and talks on aspects of Verdi's works. For academics, the high point will be the Verdi conference in June this year.

Another variable in the equation is what will be done while the Opera House closes for redevelopment in 1997. Suitable venues will have to accommodate the planned

productions. The Theatre Royal Drury Lane is a possibility, as are Sadler's Wells and the long-defunct Lyceum. Nicholas Payne, the present opera director, has promised that the Royal Opera will retain a strong presence in London until the refurbishment is completed, expected to be in late 1999. Throughout it all, the Verdi Festival should provide a solid anchor.

Festivals on the scale of the Verdi event may be the exception at Covent Garden, but they are not unique. Since the end of last year, the Royal Ballet has been paying tribute to Frederick Ashton, its founder choreographer. Its short festival of 12 ballets and diversissements continues this year with a new production of *Rhapsody*. And the Royal Opera House lives cheek by jowl with the Covent Garden Festival, with its special emphasis on emerging talent in opera and musical theatre.

But if anyone needs other ideas, the year 2013, as Sir Edward helpfully points out, is the bicentenary of the birth of both Wagner and Verdi. This one could run and run.

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Take that off and party

Alan Jackson wonders what will be revealed next to make teenage pulses race faster

Just back from my local news agency, I turn the pages of a magazine which boasts a nipple count to rival even that of the *Daily Sport*. You might assume I've been trawling along the top shelf, but it's not the case. And I should mention that the chests in question are male, not female. Welcome to the world of *Smash Hits*, required reading for many of the nation's younger schoolgirls (and more than a few gay men, it's safe to say). This is a world in which shirts are made to be wriggled out of, belt buckles to be loosened, muscles to be flexed... all in the name of commerce. And the competition for famous flesh is fierce, I discover: "20 Cool Droids" promises a coverline to the current issue of a determined-not-to-be-out-done *Just Seventeen*.

If you're over 30, you may reflect that it wasn't like this when you were a teenager. You may even be moved to wonder what the young people of today are coming to. Well, I'd be in no position to point an accusing finger. Though amused and entertained by the cheerful narcissism and bump-bearing costumes sported by teen heroes Take That on their recent tour, I admit I was taken aback by the wholly explicit sexual instructions shouted to American R'n'B superstar R. Kelly by young girls at his London concert last weekend. Pop sociologists may care to point out an essential socio-ethnic distinction at this point — the former act and its constituents are white, the latter black. All I know is, the Monkees always kept their tops on.

My first awareness of the concept of puppy love for pop stars came via a giant poster of that group's drummer, Mickey Dolenz, bought by my older sister in the summer of 1967 to decorate her bedroom wall. He was, thankfully, fully dressed in the photograph and, I thought, rather frightening-looking, but that didn't stop my father predicting it



Take That, the Osmonds of today. Their bare-faced cheek can be amusing and entertaining, but is pop going hardcore to attract jaded teenagers?

would all end in his daughter's downfall. It didn't, of course, and, in the inevitable way of these things, she soon transferred her teenage affections to some other protégé of a record company's marketing department. But the stakes have been raised considerably since then. From the Bay City Rollers, through Bros, to recent hopefuls Bad Boys Inc (this week dropped by their record company), each new wave of wannabes has had to try a little harder, bare a little more.

The whole cultural climate means that teenagers today are much more conscious of sex," asserts Alex Kadis, former features editor of *Smash Hits* and author of a recent biography, *Take That: In Private*. "For instance, the 9pm watershed is a joke, because most of them have got TVs in

their bedrooms and so have access to all sorts of adult programming without their parents' knowledge. Then there's whatever material they're reading, and the widespread use of nudity in advertising... It's all culminated in the creation of a generation of teenagers who, though not necessarily more emotionally advanced than their predecessors, are definitely more sexually aware."

So while pasty-faced crooners with two left feet and bad dress sense may have done the business in years gone by (Donny Osmond, come on down!), more is required in our own post-Chippendale era. Hanky male imagery is everywhere — even the pines of prime time have undergone a sea change. A decade ago, for example, pale, inarticulate car mechanics/shortorder chefs/no-good no-hopers with Mancunian accents and names like Brian Tilsley set the pulses of young females racing. Today, Our Brian would be no rival for young Bruce Surboard and all the other bronzed, inarticulate car mechanics/shortorder chefs/no-good no-hopers with Sydney accents who populate the Oz soap operas watched by channel-grazing schoolgirls just home from class.

The result is that the new generation of aspirant male pop idols cannot hope to bluff their way to stardom with just a winsome smile and the ability to hold something approaching a tune. To be real contenders, they need bodies that could grace a centrefold (it's no accident that all of the

Each new wave of wannabes has had to bare a little more

current wave of Brit-popsters have courted that gay market as assiduously as the pocket money ones), dance moves to cause even a gymnast sleepless nights, and the ability to hold that tune while simultaneously holding their crotchets (R. Kelly, you're in a class of your own here). Which favourite of yesteryear could compete in such conditions? David Cassidy might just have made it — after all, in 1973 he caused apoplexy among parents by being photographed

coily nude by Annie Leibowitz. Few others. For could we really have coped with the spectacle of our own dear David Essex doing cartwheels while dressed in black latex trousers, the seat carefully cut out? Or of Cliff Crooning "Bachelor Boy" while slowly rotating his hand over that region which lies due south of his waistband? I think not. Which is perhaps why the thirtysomething generation and beyond finds teen pop's new physicality fascinating but sometimes scary to observe. "You catch 11-year-olds practising bumping and grinding together at class discos and, though they're not aware it can be interpreted as a mating call, I'm aware of my instinct to find it obscene," says Sandra Redman, 36, who teaches 11 to 16-year-olds at Canning Town's Cumberland School in east London.

Yet although allegiance to pop groups continues to be a way for children to define their identities — we're very close to East 17's home turf here, and among the younger ones there's constant rivalry between their fans and those of Take That — I'd agree that it's part of a wider phenomenon. Kids today have access to all manner of grown-up material that wasn't available when we

were their age. They're just responding to the cultural conditions they see around them." When pressed, Redman admits to having had a teenage crush on Jermaine, prettiest of the then Jackson Five. Alex Kadis, meanwhile, says it was Rollerzmania that first got her: the love of one Woody in particular.

Whatever the era of that first crush, then — and whether or not the object of affection kept his buttons done up or willingly shrugged it all off at the first sight of a flashbulb — it seems that teen-idol worship is a phase that most girls go through, a rite of passage almost. Though perfectly willing to speculate on whether the trend to ever-greater body exposure will continue ("Quite possibly, if the European pop mags are anything to go by: they're full of 'bites'") and whether or not Irish new kids Boyzone can really give Take That a run for their money ("Only if they can come up with good material of their own"), Kadis suggests that emotional maturity will kick in sooner or later.

"I loved Woody because he never said anything in interviews; I thought that made him mysterious," she says, smiling. "I realise now that he was probably just sick."

CONCERTS: New music: post-bop sax

A few slips twixt score and stage

Not every evening of the PLG Young Artists New Year Series can hope to match performing and composing skills in equal measure. On Tuesday it was the composers who were weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Things had begun promisingly enough at 6pm with the 23-year-old Latvian pianist Diana Ketter showing she had all the speed, strength and imagination to bring off the kinetic energy of Judith Weir's *The Art of Touching the Keyboard*. She did her duty, too, by three of John White's tiny, single-movement piano sonatas.

Ketter's compatriots, Peteris Vasks and Juris Karlsons, were made of tougher stuff. Vasks's *Landscapes of the Burned-out Earth* dates from 1992, when Latvia's independence had just been restored. The work's polarised gestures of bright, high percussive shocks and low, rumbling aftershocks gradually become connected, meeting in powerful octaves, and gradually becalmed to a final, ambiguous peace.

Karlsons's *Sonata No 2* offered three movements of post-modernist bric-a-brac, which was relieved by Ketter's beautifully played encore of

PLG Young Artists Series
Purcell Room

two Scriabin Poems. The young Swiss harpist, Parizka Meier, shared a stimulating if somewhat over-extended 7.30pm concert with the equally accomplished Onyx Brass ensemble. I particularly enjoyed her London premiere of Dennis Eberhard's *Especially* (v.v.).

And I particularly disliked the shallow pretence of Georges Aperghis's *Fidélité pour harpiste seule regardée par un homme* in which Meier was required to chatter fragmented French words into the strings and into the darkness for 25 minutes.

Best and worst of the brass? Well, they began with Philip Wilby's splendid *Partita on the Krakov Fanfare*, a cunning exploration in space and time of the capabilities and musical history of trumpet, tuba, horn and trombone. And they ended with John White's *Doggerel Machine*, an aptly-named premiere of one of this year's PLG commissions.

HILARY FINCH

Pop of the bops

George Coleman
Ronnie Scott's

Memphis-born tenor man George Coleman plays in precisely the manner his physical appearance leads one to expect: his is a rugged but sinewy sound produced by a solid, six-foot frame. Firmly in charge from the moment he stepped to the microphone and launched himself into his first solo on the old warhorse "Green Dolphin Street", he remained in complete control thereafter, producing a set which could have served as an hour-long masterclass in post-bop saxophone playing.

Although considerably aided by a bleak yet utterly dependable British rhythm section — Julian Joseph (piano), Dave Green (bass) and Mark Taylor (drums) — and sharing front-line duties with the dozen of English alto men, Peter King, Coleman is the quintessential jazz soloist. His impeccable technique enabled him instantly to translate an apparently inexhaustible flow of musical ideas into vigorous improvisations.

The intense physicality of Coleman's playing and the grainy harshness of his tone can render his music easier to admire than to love. But he

retains just enough of a blues sensibility gained from his early days on the road with B.B. King to enable him to infuse his bop standards with what has been called — by commentator Brian Priestley — "a cry that gives the lie to the surface equanimity of the sound". Thus, although Coleman's playing seldom makes the direct appeal to listeners' emotions that Peter King's alto feature, "I Can't Get Started", clearly makes to this audience, he remains a master of his instrument.

Coleman is being supported, for his annual week in Frith Street, by a French quintet, called Le Bexet after their leader, Hammond organist Emmanuel Bex. They dispense a heady, enjoyable mix of slick jazz and Caribbean music, the effect of the latter ingredient considerably heightened by the infectious sound by Guillaume Kervel on steel drum and percussion.

CHRIS PARKER

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DANCE: Radical moves from a master

Mystery journey from there to here

Rosemary Butcher is our most neglected choreographer. For two decades she has sought to dissolve artistic borders and explore, as she says, "a new language that has its own context away from theatre". In so doing, she has produced work of radical innovation and subtle, refined perfection. She has often preferred art galleries as her setting, and her latest piece, *After The Last Sky*, at the Royal College of Art

not. They perform repeated phrases of movement, shown in synchronisation or out on other walls, or counter-pointed by other movements.

The permeations are so complex you can't possibly take them in at one viewing. Even so Butcher and the video artist, David Jackson, have taken pains not to topple into visual overload and gimmickry. The film's four contrasted sections contribute a sense of coherence: in the middle sections shifting rectangles of vast coloured landscapes superimpose themselves on the figures; in the last comes split-screening, so that, for example, Greenwood's sequence of glances is shown from three different angles on one wall. Small details seem magnified. You would never guess that Butcher's starting point was Edward Said's book on Palestinians (although she takes her title from it). Or that the composer, Simon Fisher Turner, collected all his material from everyday sounds in Israel before distorting them. *After The Last Sky* has travelled through several transforming doors before emerging with its own highly distinct identity.

It is billed as an installation, and, like much of Butcher's work, it fuses dance with art, performance with exhibition. Only 20 minutes long, it runs on a continuous loop so visitors can go in at any point. It is unmissable.

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The primer of life

**Derwent May
finds food for
thought in an
ingenious novel
about philosophy**

Keats said that "philosophy will clip an angel's wings". Modern British philosophers have been busy clipping philosophers' wings as well, having decided that most of traditional metaphysics is sheer linguistic nonsense, referring to absolutely nothing. The British, by and large, have been only too happy to agree.

On the Continent they see it all quite differently. A Norwegian teacher has written an introduction to philosophy for teenagers in the form of a novel, *Sophie's World*, and it is already a runaway bestseller in Scandinavia and Germany. It is published here now in a good translation by Paulette Møller — apart from the fact that it is in American English. It may prove puzzling to British readers when they find the 14-year-old Sophie sitting in a glider in her garden. Did it crash there? No, a glider in the States is a large swing.

Gaarder's story begins when Sophie, a small-town schoolgirl, gets a letter saying simply "Who are you?" Another follows, saying "Where does the world come from?" Mystified, she nevertheless begins to think about these questions — and soon far letters start

SOPHIE'S WORLD
By Jostein Gaarder
Phoenix House, £16.99

arriving from her unknown correspondent, delicately introducing her to the history of philosophy.

Gaarder makes a strong, sensible decision at this point. He decides that Sophie will be fascinated by these letters, without going into the question of why she should be — and off she sets on her course, starting from scratch with Parmenides and Heraclitus. Descartes and Spinoza are visible in the middle distance, Kierkegaard and Sartre beckon on the horizon.

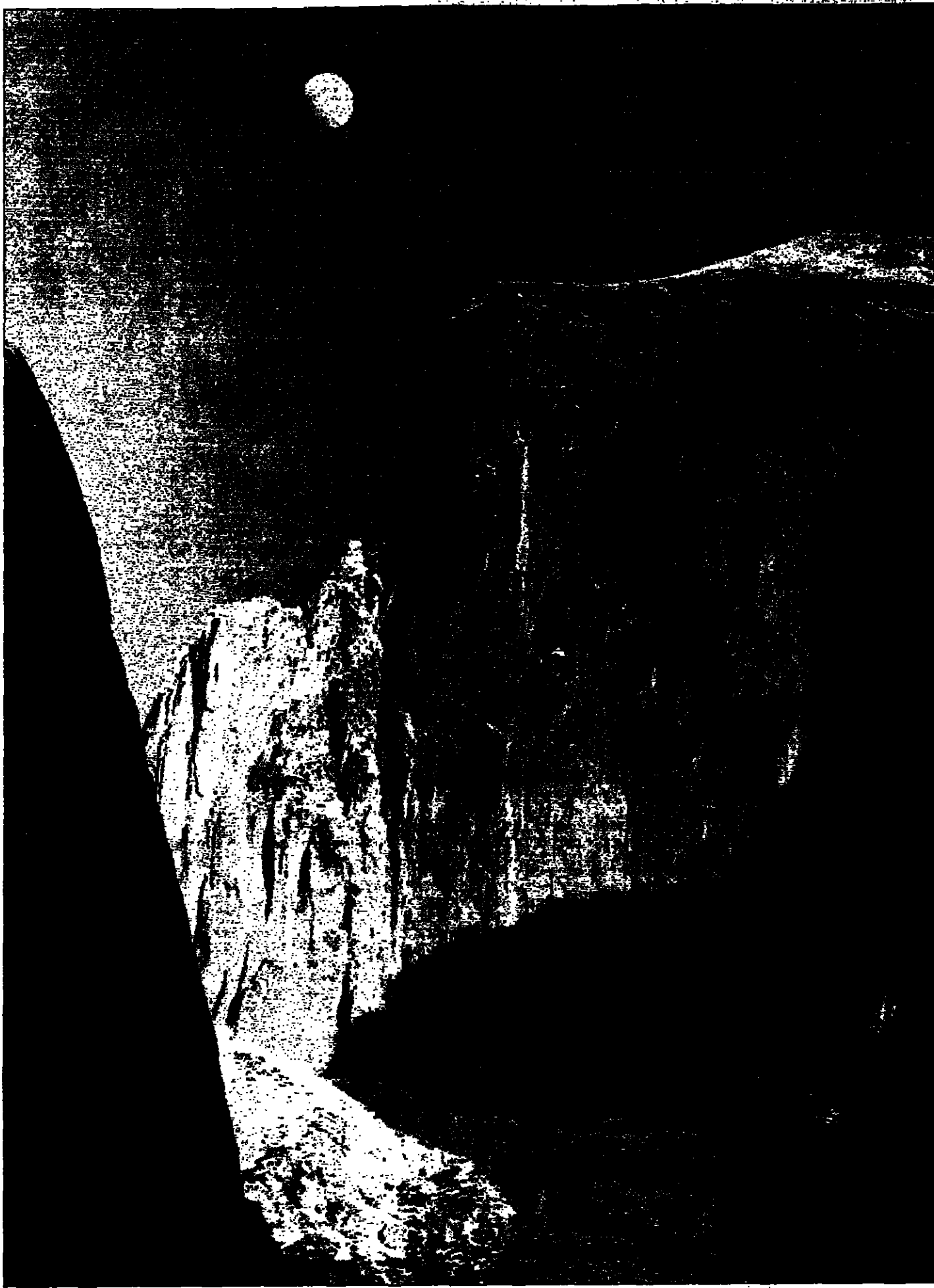
But this is also a novel — and there are many other things to intrigue Sophie. A large dog starts bringing the letters to her. A video tape arrives, with film of the Parthenon — and a middle-aged man with a blue beret and black beard standing in front of it.

This man proves to be her philosopher, Alberto Knox — and he introduces her in turn, by video, to Socrates and Plato, who are standing in the colonnade. Soon she meets Alberto in the flesh. He lives on the edge of her town in a tumble-down, lakeside cottage, and there she starts her lessons.

More and more uncanny things begin to happen. Sophie receives some letters of a different kind — messages to pass on to a girl called Hilde, whose father, like Sophie's, is an army officer with the United Nations in Lebanon. Sophie dreams about a gold crucifix — and wakes up to find it under her pillow. It all begins to seem a bit too magical for an otherwise level-headed philosophy primer.

Then Gaarder springs his next trick. It turns out that the story we have been reading is actually a book within a book — it is a tale about Sophie and Alberto that has been written for the other girl, Hilde, who now comes on the scene as a "real" person. I don't want to give too much of the story away because it is attractively mystifying. But this twist must be mentioned because, as we shall see in a moment, it is ingeniously connected with one of the book's philosophical points.

Meanwhile, the summaries of the ideas of the great philosophers have been accumulating. They are well-done — rooted in confident knowledge, balanced, and enjoyably written. Sophie responds intel-



Moon and Half Dome, Yosemite National Park, 1960 by Ansel Adams, from Yosemite and the High Sierra (Little, Brown, £40). Adams was the greatest photographer of the High Sierra; his images of Half Dome invested it with the aura of a sublime mystery

ligently to them, and relates them to her life and other things she has been thinking about.

The sections on Kant and Hegel — perhaps the two most difficult challenges — show easily and freshly how some of their ideas are still commonly accepted, though few realise where they come from. For instance, there is our Kantian notion, perhaps all too common, that moral intentions may be good whatever their consequences, and our Hegelian idea that art is the supreme measure of a society's achievements.

But by now Sophie and Alberto are rebelling because they have realised that they are no more than characters in an author's mind. This absurdist twist comes just when the history of philosophy has reached Bishop Berkeley and his conviction that human beings "exist only in the mind of God". Sophie and Alberto are dramatically revealed as occupants of a Berkeleyan universe, with a novelist standing in for God — what's more, they know the fact and hate it! It is an effective educational joke.

It must be said that there is a touch of both canniness and political correctness about Gaarder. When he is talking to Sophie, Alberto pays exaggerated attention to the role that women have played both in the history of philosophy and in the thoughts of philosophers. This will undoubtedly help to endear *Sophie's World* to many of its young readers. Another thing is that Sophie is very, very even, and she is quite free to her mother about her movements when she is first meeting Alberto. This may also be a deliberate ploy to help teenagers to identify with Sophie.

The real problem for a book like this is that in spite of all Gaarder's charm and cunning, the majority of teenagers may simply never get interested in philosophy (how many young Germans, even, have received their copies as prizes or presents?) — while the handful who are genuinely excited by the subject will want the knotty argument which is the soul of philosophy, but which they will not find here.

However, if there are any British Sophies, they should rush out and buy the book immediately.

WHAT IS so refreshing about the current flourishing of Irish writing is its diversity. The diffusion of style and subject matter makes neat categorisation impossible and enhances the pleasure that unpredictability brings. Edward Toman and Desmond Hogan were both born in Ireland, although on different sides of the border, and have worked and travelled in a wide range of countries. Their new novels, however, exist in very different worlds.

Edward Toman's *Dancing in Limbo* is the sequel to his debut novel, *Shambles Corner*, and continues in the same comic and exuberant style. Toman tilts at Ireland's tribal war and the superstition which often passes for religion. The satire strains mercilessly at the seams of the plot. Like Father Frank Feely's cure for a hangover — two Alka Seltzers in a glass of Lourdes water — the tale bubbles away with verve and invention.

The story centres on the competition for Ireland's immortal soul between Cardinal Schnozzle O'Shea, leader of the Papal patri-

Hello Dublin, goodbye Berlin

David Park

DANCING IN LIMBO
By Edward Toman
Flamingo, £5.99 pbk original
A FAREWELL TO PRAGUE
By Desmond Hogan
Faber, £8.99 pbk original

arch, and Oliver Cromwell McCoy, the voice of Protestant fundamentalism. In this surreal world: Special Operation Units of nuns go armed with automatic weapons and the loyalist butcher Sammy Magee marries his saucy red white and blue, "the colours running through them like a stick of Portrush rock".

In the struggle for the nation's gullible soul both sides take to the airwaves, with Schmozzle setting up his Protestant radio station in front man for a television programme and McCoy transmitting his particular brand of madness. Throw in the mystery of the disappearing statue of the dancing Madonna, and a climax involving the Popemobile and a hurtling ice-cream van and you have a lively and enthralling romp.

It would be hard to imagine a more convincing work than Desmond Hogan's fifth novel, *A Farewell to Prague*. Part autobiography, part novel, part travelogue, Hogan has eschewed a traditional chronological narrative to produce a reeling journey of memory which traverses the continents of Europe and America,

relentlessly collecting and commemorating broken fragments of experience. He forges glittering little icons from fleeting glimpses of people and places in a series of pastiche epiphanies, creating a mosaic which the author pieces together in the uncertain hope that universal truth will emerge.

Again and again the restless journey takes him to the cities of Eastern Europe, tracing the byways of love and loss, searching for the fullness of identity, for a newer, richer consciousness than the one afforded by the claustrophobia of Ireland. And yet it is to Ireland that the author's mind constantly returns, circling like a moth round the island's flickering filament.

This is a challenging, ambitious novel, tragically held together by a coda of place names and the threads of memory. In his search for understanding, for new ways of constructing meaning from the chaos of experience, Hogan takes many risks, but like all true travellers knows that in a world where final destinations remain uncertain, it is the journey itself that truly matters.

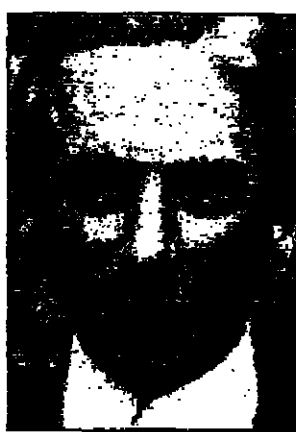
Why Cambridge people are packed with guile

John Adamson

CAMBRIDGE MINDS
Edited by Richard Mason
Cambridge University Press, £25/£9.95 pbk
UNIVERSITY POLITICS
F.M. Cornford's *Microcosmographia Academica*
Edited by Gordon Johnson
Cambridge University Press, £25/£9.95 pbk

Nor were such matters confined to the Bad Old Days. Take the case of another "Mind" claimed for Cambridge in his book, Max Perutz. One of the greatest molecular biologists of the century, Perutz worked in Cambridge for 14 years before the university begrudgingly appointed him to a lectureship (by which time he was already an FRS), only to force him to resign a few years later by persistently refusing him promotion. He went on to win a Nobel Prize and be appointed to the Order of Merit.

What emerges from these essays as the university's salvation is the very quality which so infuriates tidy-minded bureaucrats and central educational planners: that it is not a single, efficiently planned organisation, but a sprawling, benignly anarchic coalition of three distinct entities. They are the university proper (the faculties and central administration); the colleges (self-governing, self-



Cambridge begrudged their success: Russell and Perutz



recruiting, and property-owning since the 13th century); and the penumbra of independent research institutes and laboratories clustered in the immediate environs of the town. When one element in the trinity fails, there are two others to keep talent within Cambridge's capacious fold.

The result is a system of labyrinthine complexity, a sat-

irist's delight. And no one has exposed the system's absurdities more deliciously than F.M. Cornford in his instructional manual for the young academic politician, the *Microcosmographia Academica* of 1908.

If today few, including even his latest editor, get all Cornford's arcane jokes, his maxims have achieved the

status of timeless truths. There is that refuge of the traditionalist, the Principle of "Every public action, which is not customary, either is wrong, or, if it is right, is a dangerous precedent. It follows that nothing should ever be done for the first time". And there is the Principle of the Wedge: "That you should not act justly now for fear of raising expectations that you may act still more justly in the future."

Gordon Johnson's accompanying essay is an elegant and meticulously researched account of the turn-of-the-century Cambridge which provoked Cornford's satirical pen: the university a-buzz with controversy over the "great issues" of the admission of women, the merits of state versus private funding, the creation of new faculties, the status of the Established Church. And if other debates were of lesser moment, they were conducted with no less energy and acerbity. Johnson's (often very funny) footnotes are replete with

such causes célèbres as the impassioned campaign by readers in the University Library against the noisy King's College peacock, or the recent attempt to include extracts from the notorious Squidgygate Tape in an examination question dealing with attitudes to monarchy in the Roman Empire. Those who killed the proposal were duly dubbed the "Squidgycides".

To Cornford the enemy is always the conservative, and the result is a one-sided satirical gem. Running through his book is another maxim, one which is unstated but which underlies all the rest, the Principle of the Reformer's Moral High Ground, namely, that all change, however foolish or ill-conceived, can be termed "Reform", and since Reform is axiomatically a Good Thing, it therefore follows that there is no change which is not for the good. It never seems to occur to him that procrastination, subterfuge and rhetorical sleight of

hand are not just the monopoly of the reactionary.

To its credit, the Byzantine system which Cornford so exquisitely derided has thus far proved Cambridge against the irksome dominance of any single ideology or faction. Another Cambridge mind (and Britain's greatest postwar philosopher), Michael Oakeshott, might have glossed Cornford's *Microcosmographia* rather differently: in its conviction that "planning" and excessive centralisation are the enemies of liberty, Cambridge offers a microcosm, not just of domish whimsy, but perhaps also of political wisdom.

Dr Adamson is a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge.

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مكتبة الادب

Alasdair Palmer welcomes a new geography of Britain's governmental jungle

Quangos to the left, quangos to the right

Nearly two hundred years ago, *The Black Book* listed the functions and salaries of the most important employees of the state. Amongst the sinecures, placemen and pensioners, there were such admirable public servants as the Hon Patrick Plunkett, who received £500 a year — perhaps £20,000 in today's terms — as Purse Bearer to the Chancellor of Ireland (his brother); Lord Hereford, who tucked away £1,000 a year as Captain of the King's pole-axes; and Lord Liverpool, who in addition to the £6,000 he received as First Lord of the Treasury, collected £4,500 for his critical work as Warden of the Cinque Ports.

Reading *The Times Guide to the New British State*, you are constantly reminded of *The Black Book*. The names have changed. Chairman, Chief Executive and Consultant have replaced Purse-bearer, Captain and Warden — but the waste and inefficiency continues, only on a more gigantic scale. *The New British State* reports that last year, local and health authorities alone found it necessary to spend £120 million on management consultants, whilst Whitehall's own efficiency unit reckoned that the amount central government agencies were wasting — as opposed to merely spending — on consultancy fees amounted to £65 million a year. Arthur Andersen, Coopers & Lybrand and other consulting firms have made small fortunes. Good for them. The rest of us probably got better value from the pole-axes and purse-bearers.

And who thought up this new way to pile up our money, set a match to it, and watch it burn? None but a government determined to put an end to reckless public spending for ever. *The New British State* sometimes reads like an extended essay on the iron law of government: every government initiative has the opposite effect to the one intended. From Margaret Thatcher to John Major, the Conservatives have reiterated time and again that their primary

aim is to cut down the luxuriant jungle of departments, quangos, and other public bodies threatening to strangle everyone not on the government's pay roll.

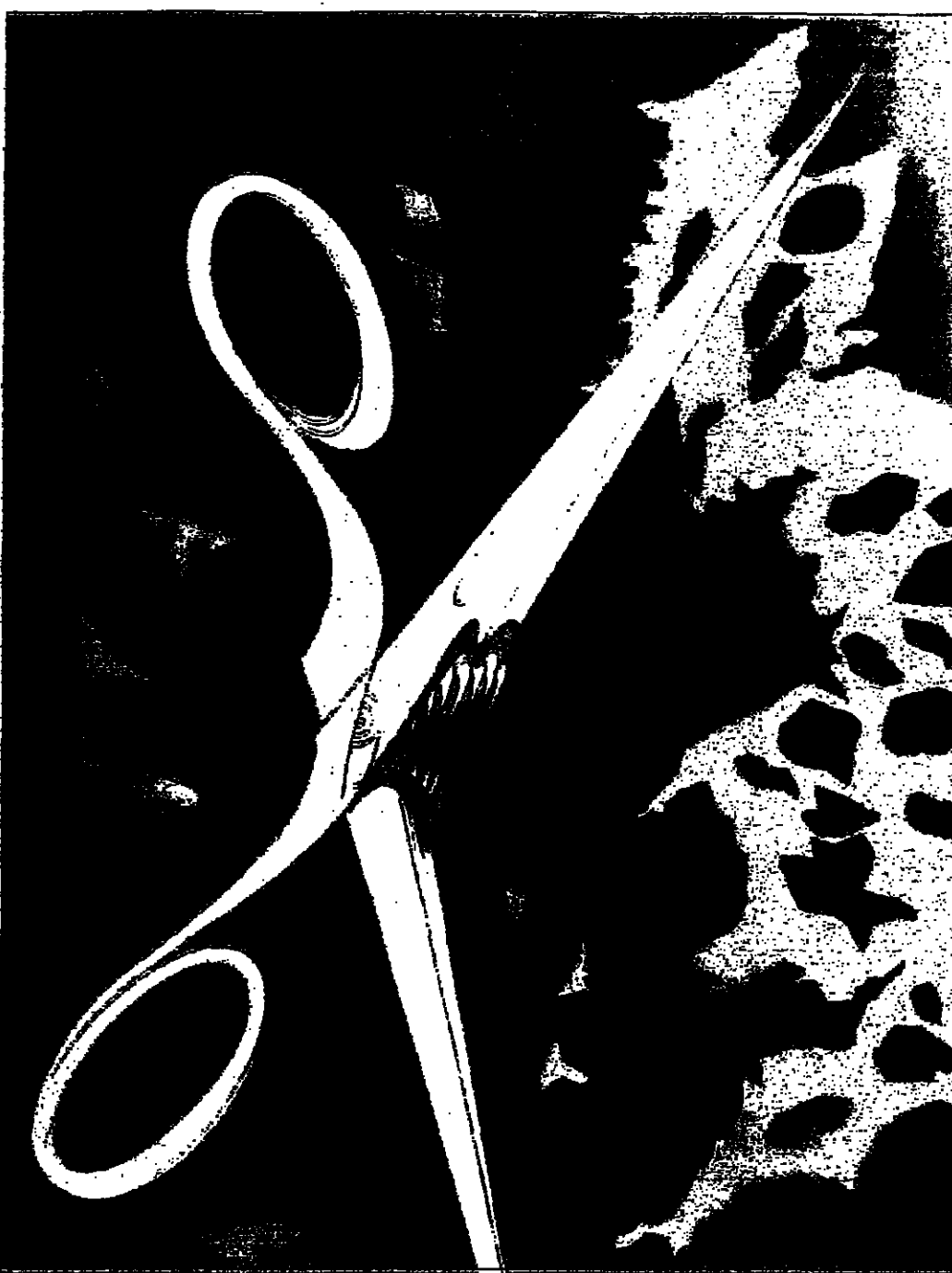
The New British State bears detailed and depressing testament to the extent to which they have failed, and indeed failed so comprehensively that, were it not for the iron law of government, you could be forgiven for thinking that all along, what they really wanted to do was increase government rather than cut it back. When the Conservatives came to power in 1979, there were around 2,000 quangos. There are now over 5,000, mopping up £46 billion of taxpayers' money every year. And their number continues to grow, each one providing gainful employment for placemen and management consultants.

THE TIMES GUIDE TO THE NEW BRITISH STATE
The Government Machine in the 1990s
By Michael Dynes and David Walker
Times Books, £16.99

The multiplication of quangos is only one part of the cultural revolution. There has also been the attempt to break up the civil service into semi-autonomous "executive agencies", whose work can be offered out to private contractors. This has been promoted as a way of saving money and improving services, but private monopolies are often at least as inefficient as public ones, and generally more corrupt.

On this subject, *The New British State* very aptly quotes Richard Darman, director of the US Office of Management and Budget, and one of the Hezbollah of the Reagan Revolution. When asked to report the results of a survey on the effects of contracting out public services in America, Darman had to admit that it had "led to the waste of billions of dollars, mismanagement on a massive scale, corruption and fraud". That is exactly the way it was here in the good old days when government consisted in handing £500 a year to a purse-bearer or pole-axer and leaving him to get on with it.

The authors of *The New British State* stress that they are offering only a guide to the geography of government, and not a philosophical treatise on how to improve the



"Gradually, in my drawings, she turned from flesh and blood into pure polished, dangerous, unyielding, crushing, cutting metal." Gerald Scarfe in *Scarfe-Face* (Sinclair-Stevenson, £9.99)

landscape. Indeed, each chapter of the book is accompanied by an exhaustive and invaluable list of every relevant government office or public body, together with phone numbers, addresses, and names of who to contact. So if you've ever wondered who ran the UK Scabelling Board, or the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges, or the Home Crown Cereals Authority — or even if you just want to know whom to complain to when the state "does something you don't like" — this is the book for you.

Although it does not attempt to answer it, *The New British State* inevitably raises the question of what we should want government to do about itself. Most of us do not care. The reform of government machinery is about as high on the electorate's list of concerns as the future of the Apple and Pear Research Council (whose address and chairman you will find in this book). But we should. Like clean air, uncorrupt, efficient government is appreciated only when it's gone — but when it's gone, it cannot be brought back.

How are we to maintain the incorruptibility yet increase the efficiency? Replacing the civil service with the free market is trumpeted as the solution, but it cannot be, and for one very obvious reason. Government is a monopoly. Two competing governments — as in Bosnia or Chechnya at the moment — mean civil war. Without competition, there can be no market. No amount of changing the names to make officials sound like company executives can disguise that fact. However much is privatised, monopoly remains the central feature of all functions funded by taxes.

Dynes and Walker have nothing to say about how to prevent the power monopoly bestows from being corruptly used, which is frustrating: the intelligence and good sense of the authors makes one wish they had been more ambitious. Historical perspective is also lacking. Again, that is perfectly understandable given the task Dynes and Walker set themselves. But since the

shape of government now is the product of its past, their map would have benefited from some historical insight. For most of our history (or any other country's, for that matter), anyone with a public office has simply seen the power bestowed as a means of extorting money from the public. The change from pole-axes to permanent secretaries took place in an extraordinarily short period of time, and seems mostly to have been the product of a high-minded Victorian ideal of public service: morality, not economics, was responsible for it. And the ideal of public service, as Adam Smith pointed out, is not the same as the motive to maximise profits.

If that morality is discarded as "incompatible with target-achievement" or whatever the management consultant-speak is, the most likely result will be a return to the natural order of things: utterly corrupt government. The authors of this book whisper that message. I wish they had shouted it.

Alasdair Palmer is home affairs editor of *The Spectator*.

Fated to be a bloody colonial

Ian McIntyre

PATRICK WHITE
Letters
Edited by David Marr
Jonathan Cape, £35

Patrick White won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. Twenty-five years earlier, one of the English reviewers of his novel *The Aunt's Story* was John Betjeman. "Patrick White is a dead loss to libraries," he wrote, "a great asset to English literature."

A perceptive critic, Miss J. Hunter Dunn's suburban admirer, Demented German explorers and lesbian bus conductresses are not everybody's cup of tea, whether they borrow their library books in Camberley or suburban Sydney. The average *Book at Bedtime* listener does not hanker after tales of murderous aboriginals, divine fools or archetypal pioneers who glimpse God in a gob of spittle.

White's conception of writing changed fundamentally after he returned to Australia after World War II. Only then did it become "a struggle to create fresh forms out of rocks and sticks of words." There are few signs of that struggle in his correspondence.

Although White frequently enjoined friends to burn his letters, his biographer David Marr has located several thousands of them, and the 600 printed here comprise a chronological narrative of White's life and opinions. Marr describes the correspondence as "earthy, camp, savage, dramatic, very funny and free." It is all those things, and more besides.

He was certainly extremely funny, often about himself. "I expect I shall go nuts in the end like Barry Humphries," he muses. "At least he is only split in two, whereas I shall break into fifteen." He had little family feeling ("Blood relationship is mostly just a farce") and retails sardonic descriptions of his odder relatives: "Imagine a Brünnhilde who had left the Ring and joined the Salvation Army, taking with her, however, plenty of Wagnerian sex and hysterics — that was Ivy." He also had a talent for blurring out the unsayable. "I am prepared to think he had qualities that justified your love for him," he writes, condoling with a friend whose father had died, "though he did his best to hide them."

His own affections centred on his Greek lover, Manoly Lascaris, and on their animals: "At night my pug gets between the sheets and plasters herself to my side like a strip of hot rubber." "If I am anything of a writer," he confides, "it is through my homosexuality, which has given me additional insights, and through a very strong vein of vulgarity." It is a vein which marbles his correspondence, as when the writer Robin Maughan is described as having "a face like a wizened cow's twat".

If his characterisations are sometimes over-agricultural, they are always marvellously vivid. He attends a recital by Rostropovich, who "plays like an enraged bear"; in pre-war London he meets the young Stephen Spender — "a great jangling creature, like an awkward provincial girl." If he dislikes somebody, the savagery can be awesome — when their friendship dies, the painter Sydney Nolan

becomes "the great commercial traveller and gravy-train artist", and later "Sir Ned Kelly Nolan, the Irish ascendancy peasant knighted by the Queen of England." (There was some provocation. "Sir Ned" had exhibited drawings in which White and Lascaris were consigned to the circle in Dante's Purgatory reserved for sodomites.)

The best letters illuminate what made White tick. "I always see most of what I write," he told Nolan, "and am, in fact a painter *manqué*." Reading Van Gogh's letters and Grandma Moses's autobiography he is "filled with a yearning for paint". Of Goya's canvases, he wrote: "I feel I want to eat them, bury my face in them, and snuff them up. I am filled with a rage to write just like he painted."

He also learned much from music. Bach and Bartok, Liszt, Mahler and Bruckner were all important to him and he was convinced that constant listening helped him to develop a book "more logically." He felt especially close to Berg: "Funnily enough, on the sleeve of the last record I bought I found out that he was also a bronchial asthmatic."

White believed his own attacks of asthma helped him creatively: "Yesterday I was seeing quite clearly whole stretches of a novel I am planning to start after Christmas, and which has remained misty till now."

He saw himself as "stronger in intuition than in intellect — something that shamed me in my youth, but which age has made me accept as a blessing as well as a weakness." Novels "happen" to him, like influenza — he felt them coming on. When he was grappling with *The Vividness*, he wrote that the last part was full of "unsayable" things "which will probably have to write me, instead of my writing them."

Getting it down on paper was always drudgery and, worse, "I am constantly meeting ladies who say 'how lovely it must be to write'." He grumbled after finishing *The Solid Mandala*, "as though one sat down at the *escritoire* after breakfast, and it poured out like a succession of bread and butter letters, instead of being dragged out, by tongs, a bloody mess, in the small hours."

He said he was at heart a Londoner, only by fate an Australian — "I imagine it's like being born with a hump or a clubfoot: one has to put up with it." Yet as he grew older, his affinities with this country grew tenuous. "The British have the Thatcher Gang," he raged in 1982, "every bit as Fascist as the Argentinians." His four schoolboy years at Cheltenham — "there was never a day when I was not called a bloody colonial" or a "bloody cackney" — had left their mark.

Did the punishment fit the crime?

"HISTORY is a great tease," writes Dr Sean McConville in *English Local Prisons*. Victorian social history is the richest tease of all; and in McConville we can follow the whole weird process of nationalisation of our local government prisons, with a bonus for the head of the Prison Service (who already earned more than the Permanent Under Secretary at the Home Office) on establishing "a lean, mean and low cost penal system".

The story begins with the cool and punitive views of the fourth Earl of Carnarvon, the promotion of discomfort and the stopping of any remaining free communication between prisoners, "subversive", as it would be, "of any prison discipline".

It continues with the career of Sir Edmund Du Cane, manager of the prisons over many years, the disciple of Carnarvon, although, like Jeremy Bentham before him, Du Cane can be cited in support of almost every contradictory proposition on penal matters. Uniformity between prisons, harsh regimes, secrecy from the public remained his basic principles.

Later in the book the pendulum swings, opponents of Du Cane speak out, the Gladstone committee reports, and Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise begins the move that led to Borstal. The reforms, as McConville establishes, were modest, and rather pompously overstated.



A convict's home, from John Thompson's *Victorian London Street Life* (Dover, £10.95)

In 1898 by that eminent former prisoner, Oscar Wilde. But the period covered, Carnarvon to Herbert Gladstone, calls for and receives distinct narrative treatment.

On the history of serial flogging, the Garroting Panic of 1862, the trail of blunders leading to reforms, it will be necessary in future to consult McConville. The treatment of boys under 16, for example, of whom far fewer were held in custody in the latter years of the century, is illustrated by the story of a boy at Wandsworth, apparently sexually assaulted by adults. A Principal Officer is asked why he did not suspect such an attack when he came on the scene. "When I heard the boy crying I did not think that it arose from the boy being in pain, but it was the ordinary cry of a boy in prison."

History is not only a tease: it can instruct us. Here is a

detailed picture of the local prisons, that is, where remands and those on shorter sentences were held, at a period when prisoners were deliberately treated punitively and harshly. The first part of the sentence was aimed to

Stephen Tumim

ENGLISH LOCAL PRISONS, 1860-1900
Next only to Death
By Sean McConville
Routledge, £150

deter, to be a lesson to others who might commit such crimes. The second part was aimed at reforming the prisoner, by teaching him a lesson. What effect did it have, if any, on the rate of crime?

The statistics of crime were unreliable. Sir Edmund Du Cane, in an unusually gener-

ous mood, confirmed the uncertainty: "I do not think that either an increase or a decrease in crime is affected by prison systems, nearly to such an extent as it has been asserted that they have. The prosperity of the country — the facilities for getting a living honestly — the condition of education, moral and literary — the efficiency of the police — all contribute to the statistics of crime."

Undoubtedly the rate of crime came down over the last quarter of the century. Recidivism appears to have increased. There was a decline in the use of imprisonment. The causes are no clearer to us than they were to Sir Edmund.

THE STATE of sanitation was almost as obscure as the statistics. Lavatories were put into many cells very early in the Queen's reign and pointed out to foreign grandees by the Prince Consort as marks of our modernity.

The design was such, McConville tells us, that they stank and had eventually to come out again. By 1889, when the first entirely acceptable water closer became available, the cheaper option of slopping-out had been taken. As early as 1863, that formidable Inspector of Prisons, John Perry, had found the use of slop-pails "very objectionable...very offensive indeed", and declared he would refuse to certify such old-fashioned cells.

Like the old lavatories this new book should be promptly ripped out of its gloomy binding. It should be rebound in paperback, and sold at a vastly reduced price to students of most subjects and of all ages.

Judge Stephen Tumim is Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales.

ALL WILL BE REVEALED IN THE MULTIMEDIA SECTION OF THE HIGHER TOMORROW.

If you've ever thought of committing adultery — think again.

CRIMINAL CONVERSATION

EVAN HUNTER

Pattern Committee adds weight to Breeders' Day

By JULIAN MUSCAT

THE European Pattern Committee reacted favourably yesterday to proposals drawn up for a high-profile European Breeders' Day and is to throw its weight behind efforts to get the project off the ground.

Paul Greaves, the British representative on the influential committee, has assumed joint responsibility for promoting the plan, initially in Britain and later across Europe. He was optimistic that conflicts with existing Pattern races would not strangle the project at birth.

"All previous proposals along the lines of a major race day were very different to this," Greaves said, on his return from the Dublin meeting. "We are talking about setting up the event within the boundaries of an existing meeting, rather than introducing a significant number of new group races."

"It's been suggested that some new group races should be created and it may well be possible to do that. The European Breeders' Fund has suggested it can come up with a way to underpin the financing. There is every reason to think we can come up with something."

While Britain and France, the stronger racing nations, will almost certainly collect any races run at level weights, two events — essentially limited handicaps of listed status — are thought likely to attract runners from across Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and Poland. Proposals for these races include the jockeys donning silks in the colours of their national flags.

Greaves added that the message from European Breeders' Day should be as much a political vehicle as a day of high-class racing. "It's

important that the host country promotes the sport at government level through the media exposure we hope the day receives," he said. "We are trying to stage the first meeting next year, but a starting date of 1997 is more realistic."

Michael Henochberg, one of the project's founders, yesterday expressed the hope that a levy on foals, perhaps £50 per foal, would help generate considerable revenues from Europe's 20,000-strong annual crop. "Unless it is a day of valuable races it won't work," he said. "We will now work on a five-year plan. There is certainly room for a big day. The best time seems to be towards the end of August or beginning of September, which is a relatively quiet time for high-class racing."

Henochberg, president of the fledgling European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders, added that all 22 member countries expressed support for the project. "They want to promote bloodstock and this should give them the opportunity," he said.

In other Pattern Committee business, settled in Dublin, Newbury's inaugural Sunday fixture on May 21 was given

added impetus yesterday when the executive learned that its quest for an upgrading of the Juddmonte Locking Stakes had been granted.

The one-mile test has been elevated to championship status, making it the first group one flat race within the track's racing programme. Prize-money has been doubled to £100,000. "We are all very excited," Lord Carnarvon said yesterday. "We have been trying for this for a very long time. The race will be confined to four-year-olds and upwards as it clashes with the Irish 2,000 Guineas [for three-year-olds]."

Other races to be upgraded are the Goodwood Cup, which rises to group two status; and the Winter Hill Stakes at Windsor, formerly a listed race but now accorded group three status. It will be the first group race contested at the Berkshire track.

Charlie Mann, the Lambourn trainer, was yesterday fined £1,000 by the Jockey Club's disciplinary committee after he admitted obtaining a riding licence under false pretences to compete in last year's Velka Pardubicka in the Czech Republic.



Carnarvon: thrilled

Doubts surround Trophy fancies

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

RELKEEL and Trying Again, both unbeaten this season, were installed as the 7-1 joint-favourites for the Tote Gold Trophy by the sponsors yesterday — but they are far from certain to run in the £50,000-added handicap hurdle at Newbury on February 11.

The Tote's ante-post odds compilers faced a tough task when the weights for the prestigious two-mile event were published yesterday because of the uncertainty surrounding the participation of several of the 39 entries — especially those near the top of the weights.

The sponsors are offering a £50,000 bonus to the owner of any horse which wins the race and the Smurfit Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham on March 14 in an attempt to keep the best horses in the Gold Trophy. However, the lure appears insufficient.

Large Action, who beat Oh So Risky by a short head in a memorable race last year, has been allocated top weight of 12 stone, but Oliver Sherwood's Champion Hurdle favourite will almost certainly bypass Newbury unless the weather soups his intended engagements — either the Irish Champion Hurdle at Leopardstown on January 22 or the Cleve Hurdle at Cheltenham on January 28.

Oh So Risky and About

to be trained by David Elsworth, have list 10lb and list 6lb respectively, and the



Relkeel is joint-favourite in the early betting for the Tote Gold Trophy

Whitcombe trainer described them as "possible runners" yesterday.

The David Nicholson-trained Relkeel (list 5lb) has only been entered in case bad weather leads to the abandonment of his intended engagements. Sweet Glow (list 4lb) has not run since such a short distance for four years, while Spinning (list 5lb) has not raced for two seasons, which leaves Batabanoo next on list 7th.

Amid all the uncertainty, Noel Meade said Cockney Lad, a warm favourite for the Ladbroke at Leopardstown this Saturday, is likely to be aimed for the Tote Gold Trophy if all goes according to plan.

The Co Meath trainer said: "Obviously if he wins the Ladbroke that is the race I would be thinking of. He is not a big horse so he would not want to carry a lot of weight."

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Plumpton

Going: soft (heavy in places)

1.20 (2m 110yds) 1. STONY VALLEY (N) Williams, 11-1; 2. Private Handicap (N) top

1.1-1; 3. Fiddlers (N) Jones, 11-1; 4. Old Road (N) Williams, 11-1; 5. Dynamic

Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 6. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 7. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 8. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 9. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 10. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 11. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 12. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 13. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 14. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 15. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 16. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 17. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 18. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 19. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 20. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 21. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 22. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 23. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 24. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 25. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 26. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 27. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 28. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 29. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 30. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 31. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 32. Dynamic Deane (N) Jones, 11-1; 33. 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Australian plan threatens Rugby World Cup pact

Australia, New Zealand and Japan gather in Sydney today to discuss a proposal for a tripartite bid to keep the 1999 Rugby World Cup (RWC) in the southern hemisphere. In what could be a significant vote-catching exercise, representatives of the three countries will determine whether to place a consortium bid before the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB) on March 6.

On that date, all countries interested in bidding for the 1999 event will make presentations: they include Argentina, France, Wales and England — although the Rugby Football Union (RFU) will decide tomorrow whether to proceed with its bid or whether to support the Welsh project to bring the 1999 final to a

refurbished Cardiff Arms Park.

When the tournament was inaugurated in 1987, the general principle was accepted — if only as a gentlemen's agreement — that it should alternate between the hemispheres. This year, it takes place in South Africa and, therefore, the northern hemisphere might expect to host the tournament in four years' time, but for the fact that Australians now perceive the principle as out-dated.

"It's not an aggressive attempt to keep the tournament in the southern hemisphere," Dick McGrath, who is chairing the Australian Rugby Union working party, said yesterday. "We wanted to present an Asian-Pacific bid, which would fall into the same



David Hands reveals a threat to northern hemisphere hopes to stage the sport's showpiece tournament

time zone, which would be significant in commercial terms, if the Japanese were involved, and which follows rugby's achieving Olympic recognition.

Sydney will host the Olympic Games in 2000 and, were the consortium to be successful, the 1999 RWC final would be played at the city's new Homebush Stadium (capacity 80,000) with one of the pools being played in Japan and another in New Zealand (regardless of the logistic and legal problems that haunted the 1991 event played across

three distinct national jurisdictions in Britain, Ireland and France).

One item for debate would be how the consortium would stand were Japan not to qualify for the 1999 event, but the planning includes encouragement of rugby union in Asia as a whole at a time when China — if only, in rugby terms, via the Hong Kong union — is becoming a significant player on the international sports stage.

Tender documents are due to be sent out this week by RWC and applications are

sought by the end of the month. Only one host country will be specified, which will not prevent pool matches being farmed out, as would be the case were England or Wales to place a successful bid. However, the RFU's executive committee has to make a knotty decision because it has been hamstrung by a verbal commitment made in 1988.

At the annual meeting of the IRFB that year, the late John Kendall-Carpenter, the former RFU president, who was then chairman of Rugby World Cup, said that if England hosted the 1991 final (which it did), it would, in turn, support a Welsh bid for the final to be staged in Cardiff if the tournament returned to Britain eight years later. Kendall-Carpenter, who died in 1990, had no

authority from the RFU to make such a commitment, but it is integral to Welsh plans for an enhanced Arms Park or a new stadium capable of holding between 65,000 and 70,000. In the last seven years, of course, Twickenham itself has developed and, after this year, will be the largest purpose-built rugby stadium in the world, capable of holding 75,000.

The meeting tomorrow must decide whether there is a moral commitment to the Welsh cause that should be honoured or whether a statement made without proper authority should be disregarded in favour of the logistical strength of England's position. The dragon going into battle wearing an English rose — now there's a thought.

Selectors reward success in A team

By ALAN LORIMER

THE Scotland rugby union selectors have acted in the most radical manner for decades and have made nine changes to the side that lost 34-10 to South Africa at Murrayfield last November for the game against Canada on the same ground on January 21. The most conspicuous omissions are Derrick Patterson and Scott Hastings, while there are returns for Darius Cronin, Peter Wright and Gregor Townsend.

Hastings has undoubtedly been affected by the hamstring tear he suffered while playing for the Barbarians against the South Africans on December 3, an injury that has effectively sidelined him. He had made himself available, but was not included in the side. His place at outside centre goes to Townsend.

There will be considerable surprise at the non-selection of

whose has a back injury, which could keep him out of the game for up to a month.

Peters, born in Glasgow, captained Cambridge to victory over Oxford in 1991 in his second University match and, this season, opted to adopt Scottish colours when he agreed to play for the Scottish Exiles in the inter-district championship.

Capped twice in Argentina, Craig Joiner, the Melrose wing, will make his first appearance at Murrayfield. Elsewhere, Alan Sharp, whose selection was in doubt because of a back injury, has landed off the challenge of David Hilton, the Bath prop.

Canada, led by Gareth Rees, of Oxford University, will assemble on Saturday for a week together before the game at Murrayfield. However, they will be without Al Charron, who was injured while playing for the Barbarians against the South Africans last month, and two significant contributors to their most recent international, against England and France, David Loughhead and Gordon MacKinnon.

Loughhead, the tall wing who scored two tries against England, cannot get time away from his teaching post and MacKinnon, the experienced flanker, is alleged to have had a difference of opinion with the team management.

Patterson, who was regarded as one of the successes from the match against South Africa, yesterday at Murrayfield, Duncan Patterson, the Scotland team manager, conceded that it was a case of Bryan Redpath playing himself into the team with a very good performance for Scotland A against Italy last Saturday.

Redpath is one of seven players from the A team to win promotion. These seven include the two new caps in the side — Eric Peters and Stewart Campbell. Rob Wainwright, who played for the A team against South Africa, is arguably an eighth player from the junior side to make the step up.

Campbell, the Dundee lock, is just 22 but has made steady progress since winning his first A cap, against France last year. An genuinely athletic jumper, the 6ft 6in Campbell toured Argentina with Scotland last summer and played in the winning A side against South Africa.

Campbell takes over from Andy Reed, the Bath lock,



Eva Banister and Cheryl Done, her brakeman, put everything into squad training at Thorpe Park last weekend

Jolly japes hide dreams of gold

For a team about to take on the world, the portents were less than auspicious. During the one and only genuine practice, lasting for a week on the Olympic track at Igls in Austria last month, the runners on the British women's No 1 bobsleigh were put on the wrong way round.

Annette Brown, the brakeman, was responsible for the error and she paid a breath-taking penalty for it. With her driver, Michelle Coy, she had to end the day by immersing herself in a frozen pond.

Such jolly japes, with echoes of the Jamaican men's difficulties filmed in *Cool Running*, might be considered appropriate. The team competes on a surface that is scarcely ever seen and, last year, because financial resources were so limited, was able to enter only one race.

Yet, on the eve of departure for Switzerland, the team coach expressed the belief that Britain could win the second of the two forthcoming World Cup races scheduled in St Moritz. Tom De-La-Hunt, the team manager, was himself a competitor at the Winter Olympic Games at Sarajevo in 1984 and Calgary in 1988. "They are well coached," he

Stuart Jones discovers members of the British women's bobsleigh squad with their sights set on a World Cup victory at St Moritz next week

explained, with just a hint of a smile. "They have good equipment, they are well motivated and we have extensive knowledge of the track." He concedes that there is a technical problem, though, for the first race next Wednesday. The nation's prime sleds are to be used by the men in the British championships, at Igls, staged at the same time, before being driven over to Switzerland. The women will have to use reserve sleds until the weekend, but, De-La-Hunt said, "by then, we will have had another three days of practice and we could be in a position to win".

The prospect is heady, especially as the British women's team is still in its infancy. Although British women have been competing since 1990, this team was born three years ago through advertisements published by the Royal Air Force, which ran a series of courses for novices, principally at Thorpe Park, near Staines in Surrey.

It was there that the national representatives completed their meagre training regime last weekend. As Coy put it: "You push a trolley, simulating a bobsleigh, downhill, jump on and then push it back." The technique is as simple as it sounds.

It is also crucial. Shaving fractions of a second at the top of the run should lead to the carving of seconds off the time at the bottom. "The women suffer from their start times," De-La-Hunt said, "but there is no reason why they can't be as good at driving as the men."

Coy remembers being "frightened to death" when she first hurtled down the icy tube. She says she still is sometimes, particularly when facing a new track. "But the opportunity came up and I thought I'd give it a go," she said. Four crashes have not yet diminished her bravado.

One collision in Igls has already put her former brakeman out of contention. Tugging too sharply on the ropes

that guide the sled down the track in less than 60 seconds, Dawn McMonagle oversteered, ploughed into trouble and was injured.

Her colleagues are all serving members of the RAF, who agreed to fund last year's lone venture, to Winterberg in Germany. A new sponsor has since been found. According to De-La-Hunt, British Aerospace, which also backs the men's team, has made a "handsome" contribution.

With the company's assistance, the team is about to undergo its final World Cup preparations. They will "walk the track" before plummeting down it, twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon, searching for the fastest line.

The track has been built parallel to the Cresta Run, which is designed for the toboggan and for, what De-La-Hunt calls more "social, ya-hoo events". The Swiss team goes down it three or four times a week. Coy has not yet even seen it. Nevertheless, she is optimistic. "We came second in that race last year [when Ross was driving] and that wasn't a fluke," she said. "We know that we can do it."

Assuming, naturally, that Brown puts the runners on the right way round.

Conway heads list of young newcomers

NICK CONWAY, recently with the under-21 team in Spain, steps into the England senior side for the Indira Gandhi hockey tournament in Delhi from February 4 to 12 (Sydney Friskin writes). The other new faces in the squad are Jon Wyatt, Bill Waugh, Ben Sharpe, Guy Fordham, the former England schoolboy captain, and James Wallis.

Several of the established senior players are not available for the trip to India so we are taking the chance to try out the youngsters," the England manager, David Whittle, said. The squad of 16, which includes only five members of the World Cup team that finished sixth in Sydney, will meet opposition from Australia, South Africa, South Korea, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, Poland and India.

ENGLAND SQUAD: S. Mason (Fribourg), D. Luckes (E. Grimsby), J. Wyatt (Reading), W. Waugh (Southgate), M. Sutton (Bournemouth), A. Humphrey (Hull), S. Hazell (Hounslow), R. Morgan (East Dore), G. Morgan (East Dore), G. Morgan (East Dore), J. Lee (E. Grimsby), J. Wallis (Fribourg), S. Sharpe (Cambridge), G. Fordham (Hounslow), K. Tinker (Cambridge), D. Woods (Southgate).

Smith earns promotion

BOWLS: Nigel Smith, of Barking, has been recalled and Gary Smith, of Kent, promoted to play skip in England's 24-man indoor bowls team to contest the home international series at Rushcliffe from March 15 to 17. Steven Farish, 24, of Cumbria, is the only new cap.

ENGLAND TEAM: Rank 1: D. Holt (Blackpool Borough), R. Cuts (Rochester), M. King (Rochester), A. Alcock (Barnham), Rank 2: J. Clancy (Mymrotham Heath), S. Farish (Cumbria), J. Miles (South Forest), J. Bell (Cumbria), Rank 3: D. Morgan (East Dore), R. Morgan (East Dore), G. Morgan (East Dore), Rank 4: P. Blucher (Cyprien), N. Smith (Barking), G. Harlow (City of Exeter), Rank 5: S. B. Morgan (Mymrotham), M. Bagg (Westwood), C. Palmer (Stamley), W. Richards (Cambridge Heath), Rank 6: J. Hedderley (Tottenham), G. Jenkins (Cambridge Heath), S. Haines (Puddington), D. Ward (Rushcliffe), Reserves: G. Haines (Westwood), T. Houghton (Blackpool Borough), R. Moss (Preston), S. Airey (Cumbria), J. Wickham (Rushcliffe).

McCracken's title plan

BOXING: Robert McCracken plans to relinquish his British light-middleweight title, providing he successfully defends the crown next month. McCracken, unbeaten in 21 fights, meets Paul Wesley at the Aston Villa Leisure Centre on February 10 in a bid to win a Lonsdale Belt outright before moving up a division. That would put him in line to meet Neville Brown, the British champion, or Richie Woodhall, the Commonwealth title-holder, who, like McCracken, are managed by Mickie Duff.

Favourites overturned

RACKETS: Mark Hubbard and Anthony Scammell, the No 2 seeds, beat Harry Foster and Andrew Hodgson, the favourites, to win the Peel Hunt under-21 doubles championship. Foster had already won the singles championship and he and Hodgson led 2-1 before Hubbard and Scammell fought their way back into contention. Hodgson, however, twisted his ankle early in the last game and, although he continued bravely, his lack of mobility and obvious discomfort just gave his opponents the edge.

Oxford miss chances

HOCKEY: Oxford University squandered eight short corners, missed numerous other chances and eventually went down 1-0 to London University in the annual hockey match at the Douglas Bader Sports Centre in Oxford yesterday (Sydney Friskin writes). London scored from their only short corner of the match, a minute into the second half, a shot by Tervis rising into the net off a defender's stick. Oxford piled on the pressure but to no avail.

Wells reclaims lead

GLIDING: On a difficult third day of the world championships at Omarama, New Zealand, Martyn Wells, of Britain, finished sixth to reclaim the overall lead in the standard class by a margin of 27 points. Justin Willis's fourth place took him to third overall in the 15-metre class, 120 points behind the leader, Stefano Ghirozi, of Italy. Tasks over unlandable ridges with low cloud led to protests from some pilots.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 45

SHESHESH

(b) A variety of backgammon played in the Middle East, from the Persian *shash* six + Turkish *bes* five. "In this part of the world we have been playing sheshesh, what you call backgammon, for nearly three thousand years."

STEYR

(a) A kind of automatic pistol, eponym of Steyr, a town in Upper Austria, where it is made. "The rifling used in revolvers and self-loading pistols may be divided into the following types: Steyr type, four grooves; right-hand twist; grooves and lands of equal width. Used in all earlier self-loading pistols, such as the Borchardt."

WEDELN

(a) To use the wedeln technique in skiing, to change direction from side to side, from the German *wedeln* to wag the tail, also transferred to skateboarding. "The Times, 1961: 'Sign-posted high roads which shepherd each carload of uninspired humanity down from the heights, wedeln as best they can.'"

ZINGER

(c) Something outstandingly good of its kind. United States slang formed from *zing* energy, vigour, zest. "The Times, 1965: 'I think every actress needs one zinger of a part early in her career.'"

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Be3+ wins, eg. 2. Qel Bxcl; 3. Rxel Nxd3; 4. exd3 Rxd8 winning on material, or 2. Qbl Ndl+; 3. Khl Rfl+ mating.

Cup challengers in race to get ready

FROM BARRY PICKTHALL IN SAN DIEGO

A CYCLE of monsoon weather one day followed by flat calm the next has hampered the ten crews preparing in San Diego for the start today of the America's Cup elimination trials. Latecomers to the waters off Point Loma, like Chris Dickson's *South Pacific Challenge*, the Spanish entry, which is skippered by Pedro Campos, and Kevin Mahaney's *Young America*, which was damaged during a typhoon last week, have been particularly hard-hit by the lack of practice time available.

The only consolation is that, with the points system for both the challenge and defence series loaded during the later stages of the Louis Vuitton and Citizen Cup trials, the single point gained for each victory scored during the initial

round-robin series offers little more than a psychological boost. It is when there are seven points at stake for the defenders and five for the challengers, during the final round-robin trials in March, that victories will really count.

The lengthy programme to decide the two finalists to compete in the America's Cup in May is designed to hone

both crews to a fine pitch, but the vulnerability of these 75ft grand prix day-racers in wind strengths above 20 knots was highlighted during the world championship last October, when booms, battens and rigging gave way.

John Bertrand, the man who steered Alan Bond's *Australia 2* to grasp the Cup from Dennis Cornher back in 1983, is

AMERICA'S CUP CHALLENGERS

Southern Cross YC (Aus). Syndicate head: John Bertrand. Boats: two (one Australia, second campaigned from second round-robin series). Skipper: Bertrand.

YC de Siles (Fr). Syndicate head: Admiral René Marquet. Boats: two (France 2; France 3 campaigned from second round-robin series). Skipper: Marc Pajot.

Nippon YC (Japan). Syndicate head: Tatsunori Yamazaki. Boats: two (Nippon 94 and 95). Skipper: Makoto Namba.

Royal New Zealand YS. Syndicate head: Peter Blake. Boats: two (New Zealand 1 and 2). Skipper: Russell Coutts.

Taiwanese South Pacific YC (NZ). Syndicate head: Chris Dickson. Boats: one (South Pacific Challenge). Skipper: Dickson.

Copa America 95 Desafio Espiral (Sp). Syndicate head: Miguel Aguila. Boats: one (Copa de España). Skipper: Pedro Campos.

Australian YC. Syndicate head and skipper: Syd Fischer. Boats: one (Sydney 95).

the odds-on favourite to do the same again with *oneAustralia*. His first boat, designed by a consortium of scientists led by John Reiche, of the United States, and Jim Pugh, from England, proved consistently faster than Bill Koch's Cup-holder, *America 3*.

A dark horse among the many big names involved this year could well be Dickson's *South Pacific Challenge*. Dickson, who led last winter's Whitbread Round-the-World Race until he was derailed on a leg back up the Atlantic, has recently won \$4 million (£2.5 million) of sponsorship.

That, however, has not stopped the veteran Syd Fischer, of Australia, from looking supremely confident. His yacht, steered by Chris Law, of Britain, shares the same design parentage as *oneAustralia* and has proved faster in certain conditions.

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Villa to let Lamprey leave at end of season

By Our Sports Staff

NIL LAMPREY, the Aston Villa striker, is to return to Anderlecht, the Belgian club, at the end of the football season. The Ghana international, who arrived at Villa Park with such high expectations, has only started three matches for the FA Cup Premier League club.

Lamprey's limited appearances mean that Villa would not, in any case, have been able to secure a new work permit for him next season, but the club has strongly denied claims that it infringed employment department regulations by making Lamprey's transfer a loan deal. Villa said they had agreed to pay Anderlecht £1.3 million for him, but had also insisted on a clause that would allow Lamprey to return to Belgium if the move did not work out.

It means that Lamprey's season with Villa will have cost them only around £200,000. Steve Strick, the Villa company secretary, said: "Lamprey joined us on a 3½-year contract, but work permits are only issued on a 12-month basis. Foreign players are required to play in 75 per cent of matches to qualify for a renewal. Because of the strict criteria, we made contingency plans to cover such a situation." Lamprey would not qualify for a renewal under the regulations even if he played in every game for the remainder of the season.

Howard Wilkinson, the Leeds United manager, is hoping to be able to cut through government red tape in time for Lamprey's fellow Ghanaian, Anthony Yeboah, to make his debut against Southampton on Saturday. Yeboah, 30, agreed personal terms to join Leeds from Eintracht Frankfurt, the Bundesliga club, in a record £3.4 million deal earlier this

week, but will not be able to play until his work permit application is granted by the Department of Employment and, as yet, Leeds have not received any correspondence from the it.

Nigel Pleasants, the Leeds secretary, said that Yeboah is due to fly to England today and is then expected to attend a news conference at Elland Road tomorrow morning. "As far as we are aware, Anthony's application is being processed in the normal way," Pleasants said. "We're waiting on the DoE, but hopefully we will have him available to make his debut on Saturday."

Tim Sherwood, the Blackburn Rovers captain, will miss his club's Premier League match against Nottingham Forest at Ewood Park on Saturday and the FA Cup third-round replay with Newcastle United next Wednesday because of suspension. The midfielder player has had a two-match ban confirmed by the Football Association after accumulating 31 disciplinary points.

Blackburn may be without Stuart Ripley, their winger, on Saturday as well. Ripley is under treatment for an ankle injury sustained at St James' Park on Sunday. "He went over on the ankle, which is swollen and rather painful," Steve Foster, the Blackburn physiotherapist, said. "It is impossible to say at this stage whether he will be all right for Saturday."

Kenny Dalglish, the Rovers manager, is now back at Ewood Park, having fully recovered from the appendix operation he underwent on Christmas Eve, and could mark his return with another foray into the transfer market. Blackburn are thought likely to ease the financial plight of Leyton Orient, the Endleigh Insurance League second division club, by making a bid for their 17-year-old defender, Darren Purse.

Rovers have made initial enquiries about Purse, whom Orient value at £1 million. Dalglish's assistant, Ray Harford, was at Brisbane Road on Tuesday night to watch the centre half help Orient to reach the southern section semi-finals of the Auto Windscreens Shield by beating Bristol Rovers on penalties after a goalless draw. Orient desperately need the money they have been put up for sale by Tony Wood, the chairman, and the players' wages are being paid by the Professional Footballers' Association.



Lamprey: returning

Organisers punish Britain in sevens

By Christopher Irvine

THE decision not to give Britain a rating in the top eight for the rugby league world sevens tournament next month smacks of a calculated snub. The Australian organisers of the 15-nation event apparently believe that Fiji and Western Samoa have a better chance.

It is the British attitude to the international showpiece that has been punished. The fact is, however, that the timing of the annual tournament will always be an embarrassment to the domestic game, as it cracks under too much competition.

A clash with the opening Wales v England European championship match on February 11 will mean a diluted British entry. The ten-strong squad for the tournament in Sydney and Brisbane will be announced today.

Steps have been taken to avoid the strife of the past two years that caused the withdrawal of Wales from the sevens and the banning of Wigan for not guaranteeing a sufficiently strong side in 1993. Twelve months ago, Martin Offiah, Shaun Edwards and Paul Newlove withdrew from

the Britain squad amid farcical scenes. The enforced testing of selected players has also angered clubs. On this occasion, they will be able to field those chosen for both the sevens and by England and Wales in the weekend matches before both events.

With players such as Kelvin Skerrett, of Wigan, declaring Welsh interest now that grandparentage counts as qualification, a problem is developing for Eilert Hanley, the England coach, ahead of the announcement of his squad next week for the international in Cardiff.

Skerrett would have figured in the England side. Now Wales will also take an interest in his fate when he appears before a league disciplinary committee. A one-match ban would put the prop forward out of Wigan's Regal Trophy semi-final with Castleford on Sunday. A similar suspension would eliminate Paul Hulme, of Widnes, against Warrington on Saturday. Roger Millward was dismissed as coach of Ryedale York yesterday.

Letters, page 19

MATCHES PLAYED

LITTLEWOODS POOLS

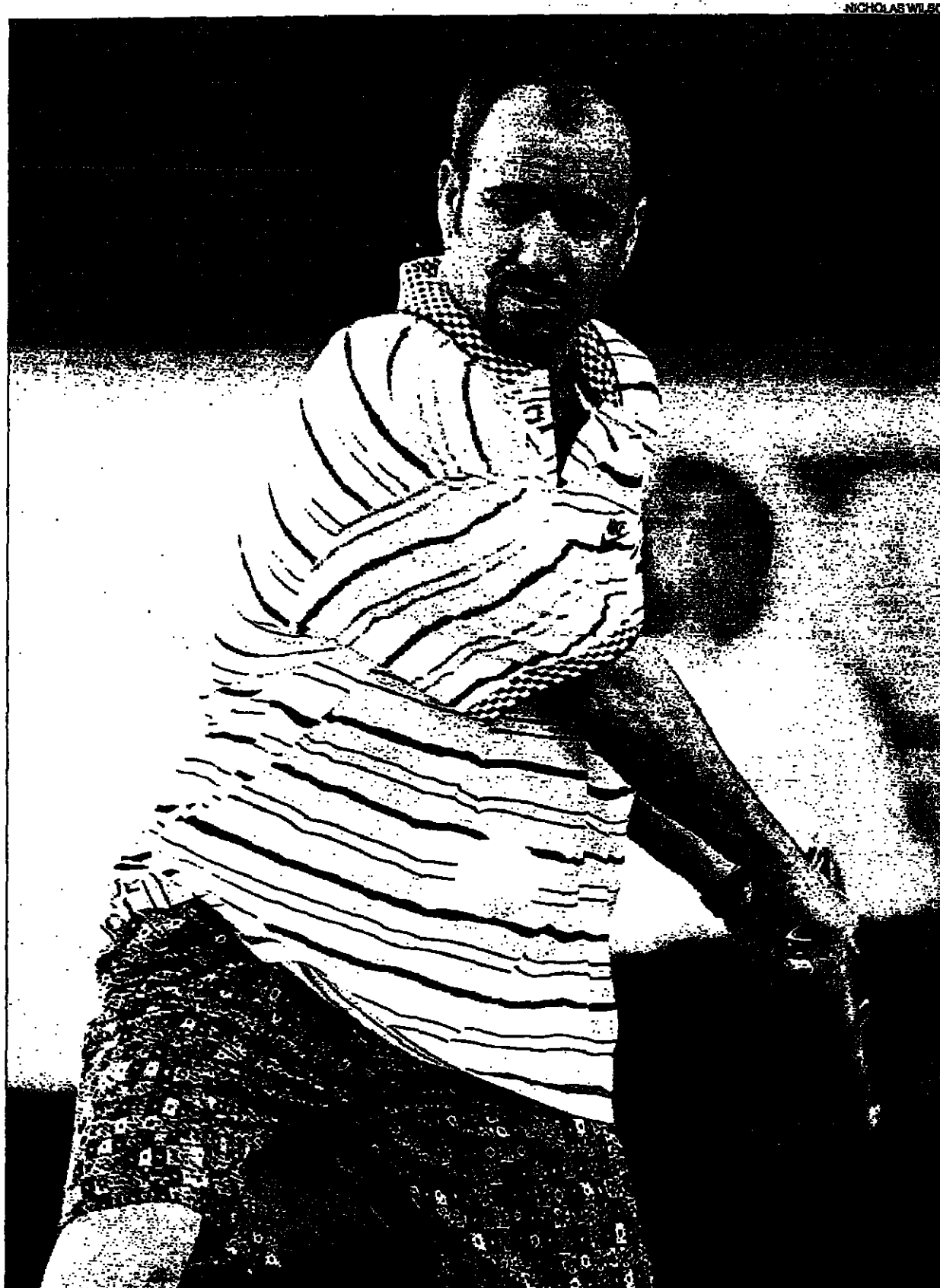
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Agassi was beaten in Adelaide yesterday while preparing for the Australian Open in Melbourne next week

Sampras gets taste of things to come

By Our Sports Staff

PETE SAMPRAS, the world No 1, was reminded of the physical challenges that lie ahead at next week's Australian Open tennis championships as he sweated through his opening match of the Colonial Classic event at Kooyung yesterday. The American, officially confirmed as top seed for the year's first grand slam tournament, had to cope with temperatures up to 36C as he beat Wally Masur, of Australia, 6-1, 4-6, 6-1.

The result took him into the semi-finals of the eight-man exhibition event, but Sampras acknowledged that the heat would force him to make a number of concessions when he begins the defence of his title at Flinders Park, starting on Monday. "When the sun is out, it creates the hottest conditions of the year by far," Sampras said, adding that he would probably have to wear a hat in future. "I

play a lot in Florida and there's no comparison."

Sampras and half of the population of Melbourne are already fascinated to see how his newly-shaven, prematurely balding rival, Andre Agassi, will react. The 24-year-old from Las Vegas has never experienced Melbourne's often extreme climate and Sampras said dryly: "I suggest he wears a hat, too."

Agassi aside, the majority of the world's top ten male players have elected to complete their preparations for the Australian Open by playing at Kooyung. Agassi was beaten by Patrick Rafter, of Australia, in another warm-up tournament in Adelaide. Rafter romped to an emphatic 6-3, 6-2 victory in 52 minutes in the round-robin tournament.

Andre Medvedev, the No 2 seed, criticised officials after crashing out of the New South Wales Open yesterday against Michael Tebbutt, of Australia.

The world No 15, who lost 5-7, 6-1, 6-2, was upset about being asked to play his second-round match on an outside court at White City. "That court feels small. I felt I didn't have any room to run," the Ukrainian said.

In the women's draw, Gabriela Sabatini, the No 2 seed from Argentina, struggled with the windy conditions before overcoming Naoko Sawamatsu, of Japan, 6-2, 6-3 in their second-round encounter. Nicole Pietrangeli, of Australia, capped an outstanding day for the host country by beating Brenda Schultz, the No 5 seed, from Holland, 6-0, 7-6.

Jan Siemerink, of Holland, beat the No 1 seed, Wayne Ferreira, of South Africa, 2-6, 7-5, 6-3 in the New Zealand Open in Auckland. Alexander Volkov, the No 2 seed from Russia, beat Jeremy Bates, of Great Britain, 6-2, 6-4, but Jakob Hasek upset Javier Sanchez, the No 4 seed from Spain, 6-1, 6-2.

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL	
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Cleveland 108 Charlotte 118; Denver 98 New Jersey 84; Washington 98 Atlanta 99; Milwaukee 82 Sacramento 88; New York 111 Indiana 105; Chicago 102 Orlando 77; San Antonio 108 LA Clippers 91; Golden State 116 Seattle 125.	
CRICKET	
South Africa v Pakistan	
CAPE TOWN (First Test): SA 208/200, Pakistan 107/200. SA won by 101 runs.	
South Africa v Pakistan	
JOHANNESBURG (Second Test): SA 208/200, Pakistan 107/200. SA won by 101 runs.	
RUGBY UNION	
Wales v England	
Cardiff: Wales 10-12, England 10-12. Draw.	
RUGBY FOOTBALL	
Wales v England	
Cardiff: Wales 10-12, England 10-12. Draw.	

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL	
PONTINS LEAGUE (70): First division: South Wales v Swansea; Second division: Wigan Athletic v Stoke City; Third division: Wigan Athletic v Stoke City; Fourth division: Wigan Athletic v Stoke City.	
RUGBY UNION	
Wales v England	
Cardiff: Wales 10-12, England 10-12. Draw.	
RUGBY FOOTBALL	
Wales v England	
Cardiff: Wales 10-12, England 10-12. Draw.	

Ice hockey season salvaged by late agreement

By Our Sports Staff

NATIONAL Hockey League (NHL) players yesterday accepted the club owners' "final contract offer, ending the 103-day lockout and saving the North American ice-hockey season."

"We're happy that hockey is hopefully going to be played very soon," the NHL Players' Association president, Mike Garmer, said outside the union's Toronto office. He said a ratification vote would be held among his 700 members and no practices would be held until the ratification was complete.

"We've definitely got a settlement. We've agreed in principle to a deal. We were pretty much pressed for time. We thought it was a good deal," Bob Corkum, the player representative for the Anaheim Mighty Ducks, said.

However, Marty McSorley, of the Los Angeles Kings, sounded a note of caution: "I imagine there will be a vote tomorrow," McSorley said. "The players may vote it down and, if we vote it down, we'll have a lot of work ahead of us."

The announcement came the day after a marathon negotiating session in New York when free agency emerged as the last major obstacle between the sides.

The owners made their last-ditch contract proposal after rejecting an agreement hammered out by their league president and the head of the players' union. The owners sent the NHL commissioner, Gary Bettman, back to another meeting with the union representative, Bob Goodenow, with a new proposal agreed at a conference on Tuesday.

The owners passed the latest proposal by a vote of 197 after rejecting a Bettman-Goodenow plan for a six-year agreement by 14 votes to 12. It was reported to be a six-year agreement for players aged 32 in the first three years of the contract and for those aged 31 in the last three.

Bettman said a deal had to be reached in time to start the season by January 16, so that a 50-game schedule and a full programme of play-offs could finish by July.

The 84-game NHL schedule was to have started on October 1, but was postponed until October 15 in the hope of progress towards a new collective bargaining agreement. The lockout was then extended. There is still no agreement in the baseball dispute. The owners cancelled the rest of the 1994 season in September, which meant that, for the first time, there was no World Series.

Wang leads defection from Ma's regimental training

By Our Sports Staff

AN OFFICIAL newspaper in China reported yesterday that Wang Junxia, the country's top female distance runner, has vowed not to return to training under Ma Junren, her former coach, saying that he treated his athletes poorly.

Wang, who set world records at 3,000 metres and 10,000 metres in 1993, was among 16 athletes who walked out of Ma's training grounds in mid-December over differences over prize-money and discipline.

"If coach Ma had treated us better, we would have worked ourselves to death," Wang told *Beijing Youth News*. The paper paraphrased Wang as saying: "I'm not returning to the Ma Army [as Ma's team is called], but I won't abandon my training."

The newspaper said that Wang decided to leave because she felt that she had no future under Ma's coaching. Although a high school graduate, Wang said that she was always felt self-conscious about her lack of education. She said she wants to study English, but has had no opportunities.

Wang also said that she has been emotionally damaged by Ma's overly-strict discipline and she felt Ma sometimes picked on her unfairly.

"To be upbraided in the course of training is severe," Wang said, "but I feel very wronged for being criticised for little, everyday things."

The report said that when Wang told Ma that she was quitting, he tried to persuade her to stay on. He reminded her that, if she won a title at the 1995 world championships, she would be awarded a 500,000 yuan (about £80,000) car by the Chinese Government.

However, Wang said that the athletes were willing to give up the prestige and benefits of being in Ma's team because they simply did not want to train under him.

Romanian athletics authorities have lifted a ban on Galina Astafei, the 1992 Olympic high jump silver medal-winner, which barred her from official competitions. Iolanda Balas, a former high jumper herself who is now the president of the Romanian federation, said: "The Romanian Athletics Federation has abolished the ban against Galina Astafei and she will be able to perform for Germany."

In March last year, Romanian authorities banned Astafei, 25, for three years from all official competitions after she moved to the USC Mainz club in Germany and refused to compete for Romania.

REPORTS

Depth	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather	Last snow
L	U		(Spm)	
AUSTRIA				
Igls	55 115 powder	powder	good	snow -3 11/1
Kitzbühel	80 130 powder	powder	good	snow -2 11/1
Mayrhofen	40 100 powder	powder	good	snow -1 11/1
Schladming	60 100 powder	powder	good	snow -3 11/1
FRANCE				
Alpe d'Huez	125 180 powder	heavy powder	snow	-5 11/1
Chamonix	80 350 powder	powder	good	snow 3 11/1
La Plagne	125 280 powder	powder	good	snow -4 11/1
Mégève	80 180 powder	powder	good	snow -2 11/1
Val Thorens	90 105 powder	powder	good	snow -1 11/1
SWITZERLAND				
Arns	115 120 powder	powder	good	snow -5 11/1
Cortina	150 220 powder	powder	good	snow -2 11/1
Mürren	150 160 powder	powder	good	snow -7 11/1
Villars	80 120 powder	powder	good	snow -2 11/1
Wengen	50 100 powder	powder	good	snow -1 11/1

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper; art - artificial

THE TIMES

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Departure of fast bowler inflicts heavy toll on touring team's morale

Gough's ills add weight to England burden

FROM JOHN WOODCOCK IN SYDNEY

DARREN GOUGH, England's up-and-coming young all-rounder, flew home from here yesterday with instructions to put no weight on his left foot (the stress-fractured one) for four weeks. If all goes well, he will be allowed to take some light exercise in mid-February and to start training in mid-March. The rest of England's tour of Australia will be less fun and more gruelling without him.

His place will be filled by Chris Lewis, who was in the England dressing-room at Melbourne on Tuesday when Gough broke down and was

no doubt be a record of his kind (except, perhaps, for Pakistan) should a replacement have to be sent for to replace a replacement.

It is hard to think that when it comes to injuries, there has ever been an unluckier England side — but one can never be sure. When, for example, was this written, and by whom? "Thus was added another to the long list of injuries sustained by the touring team in circumstance which went far towards my contention that modern players are soft. They do most of their training on the massage table, which produces unnaturally vulnerable muscles and renders them liable to strain and troubles that were unknown to our fathers. The players, so much in cars and on that accursed massage table, lack the strong legs without which no games player can survive."

Well, the tour was MCC's to Australia in 1958-59, the author that prince of polemicists and noted critic, E.M. Wellings of the London Evening News. The stress-fracture was probably called something else in those days, but the players were scarcely less prone to injury. When, on the same tour, Mortimore, of Gloucestershire, was summoned as yet another replacement, a cartoonist had the old club member cupping his hand to his ear and asking "Was that 40 more?"

Even then, Wellings was complaining that "the fight for the Ashes is likely to be nothing to the fight for the seats in the press-boxes of Australia, which are becoming Battersea Homes for stray cricketers". Goodness knows what he would think now. Of the 25 retired England cricketers that I spotted during the

soon in action as a substitute, his brilliant fielding being his strongest suit. The decision not to send for anyone else for the moment was taken in consultation with Raymond Illingworth, the chairman of the England selectors, who is here for the one-day match today against Australia A and will be returning to England at the weekend. Lewis brings to 21 the number of players who have been official members of the England party. Neil Fairbrother, another casualty from the match on Tuesday, has a painfully sore right shoulder, which came out briefly when he fell in the field. He will miss the game today. Himself a replacement, it will



England's walking wounded, Fairbrother, his arm in a sling, and Gough, on crutches, in Sydney yesterday

Sydney Test match, ten had captains England at some time and a good half were masquerading as pundits. It makes Michael Atherton's job no easier to find one of them round every corner.

Although, until Tuesday, Gough had kept as fit as anyone on this tour — only Tufnell has bowled more

overs (355 to Gough's 286) — he has to put so much into his game to get out of it what he does that the strains and stresses are considerable. Despite a good, orthodox action, he was born without the natural rhythm of a Trueman or a Lindwall or a Holding. He has as big a heart as any of them, but they were never

seen to stiffen up after a spell of bowling in the way that Gough is.

In no way is this intended as a criticism of Gough. He is a rare and splendid acquisition and it is to be hoped he is soon back in action, his frame able to stand up to what he asks of it. He can take heart from the experiences of Dennis Lillee

and Imran Khan, who both suffered stress-fractures and came back from them. Lillee, in fact, took 304 of his 355 Test wickets after recovering from a stress-fracture in his back. The treatment involves patience, dedication and a lot of weight-lifting. Mrs Gough will need to be as vigilant as her husband.

Down but far from out

On the Ropes, Radio 4, 9.30am.

An entertainer can safely be said to have "arrived" when he boasts that he and Harold Wilson helped to make each other famous. Mike Yarwood repeats that claim to John Humphrys this morning. He may be the fallen idol of mimicry, but it is good news that he believes there is no good reason why he should not eventually climb back on to his pedestal. Drink, and stage fright, were Yarwood's undoing. A broken marriage did not help matters, either. Humphrys does not dig deeply to establish which, in Yarwood's sad case, was cause and which was effect. I found it touching to hear Yarwood say to his sympathetic interviewer at the end of the programme: "Thank you, very much for talking to me."

Captain Colenso's Last Voyage, Radio 4, 2.00pm.

I could hear distant echoes of Dylan Thomas in Alun Richards's play which, not surprisingly, comes from BBC Wales. Colenso (Gerard James), the octogenarian seadog who lands himself into his bedroom with all his memories, is a rich, distant relation to Llewellyn's Captain Cat, right down to the errant teardrop. There is no fear that this stranded grandpa will go gentle into that good night. Richards is writing here about old age. He could easily have sentimentalised it, but does not. Neither does James's captain, whose last stand is gloriously realised. And neither does Kenneth Griffith as the captain's roughish pal.

Peter Davall

RADIO 1

6.58 Stereo, 4.00am Bronx Brothers
F.M. Steve Wilfert, with the Poses 8.00
Simon May: Kurt Russell is God of the
Week 12.45a Live A'aron, and in 12.45
12.45pm News 2.00a The 2.00a Campbell
6.40a Mark Gorker, and in 5.30a-5.45
Newsbeat 7.00a Evening Session, pre-
sented by Jo Wiley and Steve Lamacq,
including the 30-minute Menu 8.00a
Soundbite: Danny Kelly asks who buys
Michael Bolton records 10.00a Mark
Radcliffe 12.00a-12.00a Lynn Parsons

RADIO 2

Pat Stacey, 6.00am Martin Kitchner with
the Early Show 6.15a Paves for Thought
7.30a Sarah Kennedy 9.15a Paves for
Thought 9.30a Ken Bruce 11.30a Jimmy
Krawford 12.00a News 2.00a The 2.00a
Saver, and the Accumulator 3.00a
John Dunn 7.00a For Better or for Worse:
starring Su Pollard and Gordon Kaye
7.30a David Jason 8.00a Paul Jones
presents vintage rhythm and blues,
featuring Gatecrasher from 10.00a From
London to Tennessee and Back 11.00a
Schiller, in the Appalachians 11.30a
The Jonestown 12.00a Steve Macdon
3.00a Alex Lester

RADIO 3 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 5.00a The
Breakfast Programme 5.35a The Mega-
shop with Diane Mitchell, and in 6.00a
Review, 10.35a Euronews, 11.00a Out
Reaction 12.00a Barclay with Mark, and in
12.34pm Live Monday with Moneycheck
2.00a News on Five, and in 2.15a Prime
Minister's Questions 4.00a John Inver-
dale Nationwide 7.00a News Extra, and in
7.20a Sport 7.35a News on Ten, with
Francis Edwards 8.00a The Pierhead
8.15a The 8.15a of Today Brian Redfern
and boxer Eddie Thomas 8.55a
SportsAmerica 10.05a News-Talk 11.05a
Night Extra, and in 11.45a The Financial
World Times 12.00am Night News
with Steve Sampson 2.05a Up All Night

WORLD SERVICE

4.45 Times in GMT, 4.50am BBC English
4.55a Fulhamgate 5.00a News 5.05a
Morgenmagazin 5.50a Europe 7.00a
News 7.15a Off the Shelf, Oscar and
Louds 7.20a Network UK 8.00a News
8.10a Faith 8.15a Books 8.30a John Peel
8.00a News, 9.05a Sports 9.15a From
Our Correspondents 9.30a The World
9.45a Sport 10.00a News 10.05a Assign-
ment 10.30a Quota, Unquote 11.25a
News 11.15a BBC, Unquote 11.45a
From Our Correspondents 12.00a
Faith 12.15a Musicbridge 12.45a Sport 1.00a
News 2.00a News 2.05a Outlook 2.30a Off
the Shelf 2.45a Learning 3.00a News 3.15a
Greenwich Collection 4.00a News 4.15a
BBC English 4.30a Haute Audio 5.00a
News 5.05a Business 5.15a BBC English
5.00a News 6.30a News Actual 7.00a
News 7.05a Off the Shelf On the Menu
7.45a Farming 8.00a News 8.10a Faith
8.15a Today 8.30a Europe 9.00a News
10.00a News 10.05a Business 10.15a
News 10.25a Sport 10.30a On the Menu
10.45a Outlook 11.00a News 12.15a
Music 1.00a News 1.05a Outlook 1.20a
News 1.45a Global Concerns 2.00a
The Weekday 2.50a Women in the
News 3.15a Sport 3.30a Faith 4.00a News

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Batley 9.00a Henry Kelly
12.00a Susannah Simons 2.00pm
Lunchtime Concert: Weber (Clarinet
Concerto No 2 in E flat) 3.00a Brian Cox
4.00a Concert: Prokofiev 7.00a The
Toucan Guide: Italian cooking 8.00a Evening
Concert: Sack (Concerto in D for three
violins; BWV1064) 9.00a The A
Handbook 10.00a News in Q, Handel
(Dob. Duetto) 10.00a Michael Tippett
1.00pm Robert Booth

VIRGIN 1215

6.00am, Russ 7.10am 8.00a Richard
Shirley 12.00a Graham Davis 4.00pm
World Update 7.00a Paul Carr 7.00pm
Nick Abbot 2.00a-6.00am J.L. Groves

RADIO 3

6.55a Weather 7.00a On Air Purcell
(Concerto for 3, 2700), Elgar
(Concerto for strings) 7.32a
Haydn (String Quartet in C)

Glinne (Overture, Russian and
Wendell) 10.00a Rachmaninoff
(Piano Concerto No 2 in D
minor)

Shilton decides to leave his post

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

IN MARCH 1992, Peter Shilton arrived to manage Plymouth Argyle and the fan-fares sounded as the former England goalkeeper, with 125 caps, pledged himself to restore the fortunes of the West Country's leading club. Yesterday, Shilton bowed out of Home Park with little more than a whimper, a bewildered figure, beset by lurid tales of alleged financial misadventures, leaving a legal adviser to impart his final thoughts on what has been a sorry saga.

Shilton, 45, was suspended on full pay last week after failing to meet the demands of Dan McCauley, the Plymouth chairman, to settle a £50,000 debt to the Inland Revenue. McCauley claimed it was outstanding from the signing-on fee, believed to be £125,000, that Shilton received when he joined the club. On Monday, Shilton countered with a writ, claiming Plymouth had acted unfairly.

Yesterday, the twisting and turning of the past few months reached an inevitable conclusion when Michael Morrison,

ironically, Plymouth had offered Shilton the most glamorous of an olive branch by arranging a meeting, originally scheduled for today, to discuss possible ways of settling the dispute. Not only had it brought unwelcome publicity to the Devon club — although the high-profile McCauley seemed to thrive on it — it had also hindered the side's efforts to stave off relegation from the second division of the Endleigh Insurance League.

Shilton was invited to attend what had been provocatively termed a "disciplinary hearing" at Home Park, at which three of the five-strong board of directors — Peter Bloom, the vice-chairman, Denis Angille and Ivor Jones — would try to arbitrate on the complex collection of financial problems facing Shilton.

McCauley, wisely, was going to stay away. "I want the meeting to be amicable," he said.

Jones felt that open discussion, without legal representatives present, could have been worthwhile. "It would have been in Peter's own interests to come along so that he could have put his side of the argument," he said.

However, Shilton had indicated he was unlikely to attend and the developments yesterday brought a halt to an affair that was becoming increasingly protracted and tangled.

As a player, Shilton travelled the world on international duty. He made 995 League appearances — with Leicester City, Stoke City, Nottingham Forest, Southampton, Derby County and Plymouth — and was regarded as an obsessive, often isolated character who was always striving for perfection in his trade. Yet, clouding his spotless professional reputation, came sporadic allegations of drinking binges and gambling sprees.

All was apparently sweetness and light at Plymouth, where he joined as player-manager, while the team was doing well and Argyle reached the semi-finals of the second division play-offs last year.

However, as the side slid into the relegation zone this season, the simmering ill-feeling between McCauley and Shilton became embarrassingly public, with McCauley making a series of outspoken allegations about unpaid loans and other assorted debts.

Shilton's introduction to modern-day football management has turned out to be fraught and, at times, distasteful. The final ignominy will be when he has to hand back his top-of-the-range silver BMW, a symbol of a status he enjoys no longer. Whether or not he is allowed to keep his personalised number plate — PS 3438 — will probably be another matter for the lawyers.

of Gomer and Co, the Manchester-based solicitors, confirmed Shilton's departure.

"Plymouth Argyle have broken his [Shilton's] contract and therefore he has terminated his employment as a response to their breach of contract," Morrison said. "Technically, he has not resigned. By their behaviour, the club has discharged the contract. He is no longer an employee of the club."

McCauley, predictably, viewed the latest chapter through green-and-black tinted spectacles: "The way I read it, he has resigned. He will probably say he has been forced to resign, but, as far as I am concerned, he has resigned."

Steve McCall has been installed as Argyle's caretaker player-manager — he led the team in the 2-0 FA Cup third-round defeat at Nottingham Forest on Saturday — but the frequently bitter exchanges between Shilton and McCauley, which have taken on soap opera proportions since the start of this season, seem certain to continue until at least the start of next season.

Shilton will claim compensation, alleging he was effectively dismissed, and Plymouth will strongly deny the charge.



Sir John Hall, the Newcastle chairman, managed to charm some of the disgruntled supporters who gathered at the club's training ground on Tyneside yesterday

Hughes in no hurry to leave Old Trafford

BY PETER BALL
AND LOUISE TAYLOR

THERE was no instant panacea yesterday in the shape of a new centre-forward for Newcastle United supporters still reeling at the sale of Andy Cole. In Manchester, Mark Hughes was considering his future with Manchester United, which is now in doubt as a result of Tuesday's record £7 million signing.

Hughes is reluctant to leave the North West and yesterday he insisted that he was in no hurry to leave Manchester at all. "I've still got more than three months left on my contract and I've been here for 15 years, so I don't want to leave," the 31-year-old said.

Everton, Leeds, Manchester City and Aston Villa have all

expressed interest in him this season, although Alex Ferguson, the United manager, insisted yesterday that he had not had any bids. Joe Royle is likely to pursue the matter, although Everton may be reluctant to pay the £25 million that United want. A move to Goodison Park would undoubtedly suit Hughes, who lives in Wilmslow.

Yet the Welshman has a stubborn streak and it is quite possible that he will decide to stay and fight for his place, or at least hold on until the end of his contract, when he would be in a much stronger negotiating position. He is also aware that Cole is cup-tied, so that, as long as United are still in the FA Cup, he still has a significant role to play.

Alex Ferguson, too, was

quick to insist yesterday that Hughes had not been written out of his plans. "We've had a lot of injuries and absences this season — suspensions, Eric [Cantona] and Andy [Kanchelskis] away playing for France and Russia — so there is a part for him to play."

How long Hughes, whose relationship with the United faithful is almost as strong as that of Cole with Newcastle, would be content with a bit part remains to be seen. "I've always said I wanted more than a one-year contract," he said, but the signing of Cole suggests there is little chance of that now.

"If we get an offer from anybody, we will put it to Mark," Martin Edwards, the Manchester United chairman, said, leaving little doubt that

United are now prepared to sell the Welshman. "Something has got to give."

Stan Collymore, who had been widely tipped as United's big signing, may find his options have suddenly been taken away from him. Newcastle have shown no sign of interest and, if Liverpool withdraw, the forward may have little option but to consider Forest's offer of a new contract. Newcastle seem more likely to renew an old bid for Les Ferdinand, of Queens Park Rangers, or to look abroad, although the search for more physical presence would seem to undermine the reported interest in Dennis Bergkamp.

Yesterday, while Tyneside seethed, Kevin Keegan was putting on a cool front. "I'm on

a day off," the manager told his daily press call after training. "I've got nothing to say on anything that happens. I said it all on Tuesday."

Others were more forthcoming. "I like to think that we can bring someone in, but nobody is putting a gun to Kevin's head," Terry McDermott, Keegan's assistant, said. Sir John Hall, who had also gone to the training ground, assured supporters that the money from the sale of Cole will be given to Keegan to spend. "He knows what to do. Give him time," Hall said.

Bryan Robson yesterday highlighted the extent of Middlesbrough's ambition by making a £2.5 million offer for Nicky Barry, of Tottenham Hotspur. Although Barry, an England Under-21 interna-

tional forward, is unsettled at White Hart Lane, the London club rebuffed Robson's overtures. It will almost certainly not be Middlesbrough's low approach, however, as the Endleigh Insurance League first division leaders need to strengthen their attack in readiness for promotion.

As principal assistant to Terry Venables, the England coach, Robson acted on a strong recommendation from the former Tottenham manager. In John Hendrie and Paul Wilkinson, Middlesbrough looked arguably the finest attack in the first division, but both players are ageing and the club is desperately short of frontline cover.

Counting the cost, page 45
Gillespie's task, page 45

Repairs put riders back on track

BY PETER BRYAN

ENGINEERS worked yesterday on the roof of the new £9 million National Cycling Centre at Manchester to remedy a leak that cancelled the previous night's opening meeting of the 1995 track series.

Rainwater seeped through, making the 250-metre wooden track, banked to a maximum of 43 degrees, too dangerous for racing. More than 80 riders and about 600 spectators were affected by the cancellation.

The velodrome, opened by the Princess Royal last September, is the venue for a two-day international Superdrome meeting on February 11 and 12, which will include the European madison championship and a pursuit clash between the world champion, Chris Boardman, of Britain, and the world one-hour record-

holder, Tony Rominger, from Switzerland.

A spokesman for Sport for Television, the organisers of the meeting, said last night: "We believe the trouble was caused by freak weather conditions and it should not be too much of a problem to make quick and effective repairs."

Jim Hendry, the chief executive of the British Cycling Federation, who will be responsible for the administration of the centre when it is handed over by the Sports Council, added: "There is no reason why the race programme tomorrow should not go ahead as planned."

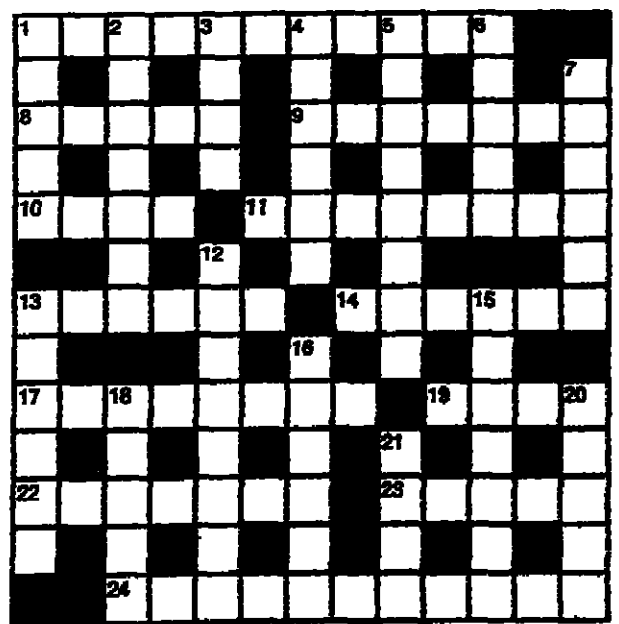
The centre manager, Paul Hardy, backed him up: "We are confident that the Manchester United chairman, said, leaving little doubt that

said. "There is no real danger to the Superdrome meeting. The problem, which we were already aware of, occurs when there is a very strong wind in a certain direction. We hope to solve the problem shortly, but we also have a contingency plan which would involve installing sheeting to channel water away from the surface of the track."

Florian Rousseau will head a trio of leading French riders at the Superdrome meeting. Rousseau, the three-time one kilometre world title-holder, joins Frederic Magné, who won the tandem title with Fabrice Colas at the world championships in Sicily, and the women's world 500 metres standing-start record-holder, Felicia Ballanger, at the eagerly-awaited competition.

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TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 367

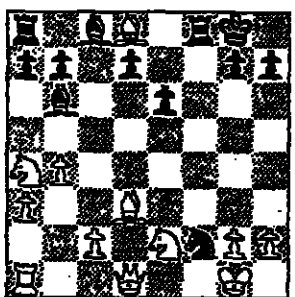
- ACROSS
- Enfeebled (11)
 - Italian: vertical type style (5)
 - Daze (with blow) (7)
 - Remove floating layer; glide smoothly (4)
 - Tungsten wire in bulb (8)
 - Cup, etc. as prize (6)
 - Fuss, to-do (6)
 - One claiming (religious) certainty impossible (8)
 - Minor quarrel (4)
 - Troglodyte (7)
 - Brilliant success, distinction (5)
 - Very overdue (4-7)

- DOWN
- Game played from oche (5)
 - (Italian) young child (7)
 - (Unattractively) long and straggly (4)
 - Ploy (6)
 - Locked spirits decanter (8)
 - Stew of braised meat (5)
 - In the prevailing circumstances (2,2,2)
 - Pawns and pieces (8)
 - Hypnotic state (6)
 - Tie pattern; Strathclyde town (7)
 - Skewered (6)
 - Book: New (5)
 - Treated as a celebrity (5)
 - Win ball from scrum: despicable person (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 366

ACROSS: 3 Leap year 7 Cleave 8 Tropic 9 Census 10 Debris 11 Seem 13 Beast 15 Know 17 Colony 18 Wisdom 19 Mayday 20 Averse 21 Skeleton
DOWN: 1 Allego 2 Ransom 3 Leisure 4 Perfect 5 Empty 6 6 Rickshaw 11 Succumbs 12 Employee 13 Bandage 14 Showman 15 Kosher 16 Oboist

This position is from the game Kennedy - Staunton, London 1845. Black has sacrificed his queen to set up a powerful attack on the g1-a7 diagonal. However, at the moment, his bishop on b6 is attacked. How did he deal with this problem?



Solution, page 43
Raymond Keene, page 7

By Philip Howard

SHESHESH
a. A bribe or backhand
b. Oriental backgammon
c. A desert tarboosh

STEYR
a. A tidal bore
b. An automatic pistol
c. Valley carved by a glacier

WEDELN
a. To shimmy while skiing
b. A Bavarian harvest festival
c. A merry trickster

ZINGER
a. An automatic pager
b. A gaffer's assistant
c. Tophole

Answers on page 43

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